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ABSTRACT

The topic of these proceedings is maintaining the momentum of the International Year of the Family (IYF), with a view toward devising further actions and strengthening the interest in support for families. The seminar examined several aspects of family issues, such as: (1) the relationship between people and governments; (2) the need for more democratization; (3) the relationship of the world of work to the private world of families; (4) relationships within families; (5) questions of unemployment and of individuals not finding their place in society, in addition to their lacking the means for survival; and (6) questions of how to deal with vulnerability and a just application of a support system. Part I presents reports of representatives of governments as well as of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on IYF projects and programs. These reports indicate that IYF and the involvement of families were of benefit to the way with which issues were dealt and the solutions with which working groups grappled. Part II presents Working Group discussions in areas in which families interact with existing structures, and hopefully interact with more confidence, greater knowledge, and competence, by using their own resilience as well as social service and policy measures. Part III discusses a number of examples of mainstreaming families at various political levels, showing the elaborate networks needed to bring attention to family concerns. This section also shows the dedication of those who are active in such endeavors and the difficulties they expect to encounter. (MOK)

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FOCUS ON FAMILIES ACTION AND ISSUES BEYOND IYF

5th International Seminar

United Nations
Vienna International Centre
6 -7 November 1995

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VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

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FOCUS ON FAMILIES ACTION AND ISSUES BEYOND IYF

5th International Seminar

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PROCEEDINGS

EDITOR: Hilde Rosenmayr

"Of course we love.
But we do not know how to handle it for families."

Seminar participant

VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

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EDITOR'S REMARKS

Hilde Rosenmayr, WUCWO

The Vienna NGO Committee on the Family is pleased to present to you the Proceedings of its 5th International Seminar, of 6-7 November 1995 in Vienna. The seminar was held at a time of winding up the huge efforts and achievements that had taken place all over the world in the course of the preparations and the observances of the International Year of the Family, at a time also, when decisive new accents were to be felt in the international agenda, when discussion started on questions of the main elements of Social Development, of social integration and their impact on the micro- as well as the macro-economic world order, as evidenced in connection with the UN "Social Summit".

The 5th Seminar had to do with those problems that shake most of our societies in the process of development, such as: the relationship of the people to governments, the need for more democratization, the relationship of the world of work to the "private world", relationships within families, questions of unemployment, of individuals not finding their place, additionally to lacking the means for survival, questions of how to deal with vulnerability and a just application of support systems, etc.

The topic of our seminar has been on maintaining the momentum of the IYF, with a view to think of further actions that comprise most of these questions, and strengthen the interest in and the necessity for support for families. Thus, the seminar was oriented towards the future, but its tenor concentrated not so much on the shortcomings and restrictions hampering families from without - or from within - but on the healing capacities and devices that should be identified and strengthened.

In Part I we heard reports of representatives of governments as well as of NGOs on IYF projects and programmes. They proved that IYF and the involvement of families with the actual concerns of communities and the different people living therein greatly benefitted the way issues were dealt with, and the solutions that could be found or aimed at.

Part II, with Professor Fthenakis' keynote paper on new concepts of family developmental processes and his accent on offering coping competence for family transitions as preventive measures, paved the way to the Working Groups. These Groups discussed at length areas in which families have to interact with existing structures, and hopefully interact with more confidence, better knowledge and competence, by using their own resilience as well as the resources of social services and policy measures.

Part III was amazingly practical: it brought to light a number of examples and experiences of "Mainstreaming Families" at various political levels, showing the elaborate networks in which family concerns have to be brought forward; they also showed the dedication of those who are active in such endeavours and the difficulties they have to expect.

The Proceedings before you are meant to provide a basis for the readers' ongoing commitment to families. The editor is grateful to the eminent speakers and the Working Group rapporteurs for providing their manuscripts. Most of them are recorded in slightly abridged versions in this publication, with hopefully the main leading thoughts.

The Committee must thank the rapporteurs for following the suggestions given for the elaboration of a "Draft Frame for Future Action: 1996-1997", which was presented during the seminar (p 36 and p 72-74). Indeed, the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family is intent on following its course to work for and with families, and invites to join in this effort to bring family supportive measures from awareness to implementation.

Of course, there were many more discussions during the seminar than can appear in this publication. Some contributions of the speakers in the discussions have been absorbed into their respective statements. In fact, the most valuable gains for the participants may have resulted from unrecorded discussions, maybe only remembered later. As our Chair, Mrs. Joanna Foster, so ably pointed out to the participants: it is communication that brings forward processes and positive developments. This is also why the contribution of a discussant was chosen as the motto of this publication.

Suffering and bereavement that may also be part of family life, was brought home to us too: because of sudden deaths in her family, first of her husband and, after a few days, of her father, Ms. Olive Luena from Tanzania (WUCWO) who, according to the programme, should have been one of the speakers, was unable to come. We must give credit to Ms. Janet Cunningham from Zimbabwe (Scripture Union) to step in at short notice.

The Chair also appreciated that for many participants English was not the mother tongue (as is the case with the editor). Some of the difficulties of communication can be attributed to this fact. However, it must be reminded that, additionally, family concerns are partly hidden and intimate concerns; "on n'y parlait pas", as the great master of family history, Philippe Ariès, remarked. Nonetheless, we must continue to speak of families, to think of how to promote families, how to set healing processes in motion, by and within families.

Finally, I must ask for your indulgence for any omissions or misinterpretations that may have occurred.

My greatest appreciation goes to Ms. Froschauer for her assistance in the production of this publication.

It is now over to you, the readers and multipliers, for further use!

May 1, 1996

OPENING ADDRESS OF THE COMMITTEE'S CHAIRMAN

Dennis O. Callagy

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

As chairman of the Vienna NGO Commitee on the Family, it is a great pleasure for me to open this 5th International Seminar and to extend a warm welcome to all the many participants from around the world. Let me share with you five words on background elements for this event.

First, a word about our Committee: As we mark the 5oth anniversary of the United Nations, may I ask you to join us also in celebrating the 10th birthday of the Vienna NGO Committe on the Family, which began in 1985 as an open platform of some 25 International NGOs from very diverse orientations, sharing a common concern for a global approach to the family. Our Committee became one of the earliest proponents and leading mobilizers for the proclamation and effective observance of the International Year of the Family. It is widely recognized that NGOs were the driving force behind IYF. In the meantime we have expanded our membership to currently over 70 international and national NGOs and developed a broad international network of some 1,400 largely grassroots organizations in over 100 countries.

The previous four Seminars organized by the Committe from 1987 to 1992 centered, first on provocative question themes: "The Family - A Marginal Group as the Basis of Society?" and "The Family - A Threat to the Freedom of its Individual Members?" These helped to dispell fears of a fundamentalist movement and to lay a positive groundwork of consensus. The last two Seminars focused on preparation for IYF and linkage with the Rio Conference on the Environment. In November 1993 we launched IYF with the World NGO Forum in Malta, which was attended by over 1.000 participants from 100 countries and called the "crowning event of the IYF preparatory phase".

Second, a word of thanks: Let me express our deep gratitude to the contributors to this Seminar, the expert speakers, workshop organizers and sponsors, in particular the Governments of Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Catalonia, as well as the City of Vienna.

I wish to personally thank Mrs. Sonja Moser, Austrian Federal Minister of Youth and Family Affairs, for the substantial financial support of her Ministry over the past three years, as well as for her own personal support, evidenced by her availability to address us here today and tomorrow.

Our thanks also go to the representatives of Germany, Mrs. Marion Thielenhaus, head of the Family Division of the German Ministry, as well as to Mrs. Agathe Sering, IYF National Coordinator, for Germany's strong assistance for our activities. Finally, we wish to remember the late Mr. Richard Biedermann, former IYF focal point, director of Social Services of Liechtenstein, who generously contributed ideas and his country's financial support to today's programme before his tragic death last summer.

We also sincerely thank our hosts and partners in family promotion, the IYF Secretariat. We miss the energizing presence of Mr. Henryk Sokalski, IYF Coordinator, who led the Secretariat's team to great accomplishments for families through IYF. Let me read to you part of a letter he wrote to us from his new mission in Macedonia. He is congratulating us for our efforts to undertake this 5th Seminar and expresses his sadness that he cannot be among us. He hopes that the interest for families will be winding up successfully and urges us to continue with courage not to slow down our work. I quote: "Family issues should not be separated from the most important problems of today... Press the UN for more to be done on behalf of the family. The family is the theme of the day for many decades to come."

A special word of thanks has to go to Mr. George Puthuppally, currently Officer-in-Charge and the most ideal Liaison Officer NGOs could wish for. We continue to be deeply indebted to him and his colleagues for his inspiring assistance and family-like partnership. Finally, as this event has been carried by volunteer efforts, permit me a last word of gratitude to the Planning Group for this Seminar. Among them, I must single out three persons who deserve our special thanks: Mrs. Monica Tupay, who has been the invaluable driving force of the Committee and its Board for years and in recent months; Mrs. Ottilie Gambrill, who has generously assumed loads of administrative work; and Mrs. Elisabeth Froschauer, our Officer-in-Charge, whose orgnizational skill and personal dedication have enabled us to meet today.

Third, a word on our Seminar programme: It aims to help keep the spotlight on the family and sustain the IYF momentum. For this the planning group decided to focus on future strategies and issues: strategically, to evaluate outcomes of IYF and look beyond to effective ways of networking and mainstreaming families into social policies: and, in terms of issues, to examine both the impacts on and the resources of families, seen in a holistic approach.

Fourth, a word on families: At a recent meeting in New York with members of NGO Committees on the Family, the head of the UN Department responsible for the family programme informed us that the future of the family programme 'lies in the hand of NGOs'. The Malta Forum, IYF and your presence here today show that family is a priority, that, though not perfect, family is possible and has potential to be a priviledged place, as it is based on mutual trust, respect and support, where the strong members do not dominate and the weak, especially, can profit from the family's unique functions: loving, caring and sharing.

Highlighting the strengths of families, IYF has shown the need to see families not only as clients, patients or objects in need of protection and assistance, but to tap families' own highly underestimated resources, and the opportunity in providing the conditions for self-help and resilience building.

The fifth and final word is to introduce our Chairperson. The task of the chair is communication, as opposed to confrontation; the word 'foster' means cultivating, nurturing and caring for. Our able captain on this Seminar's expedition is Joanna Foster, and nomen est omen. She is an expert in communication - in and around the family. She is predestined to lead us in the spirit of dialogue, exchange, listening and sharing - not avoiding disagreement - but communicating.

INTRODUCTORY WORD OF THE SEMINAR'S CHAIRPERSON

Joanna Foster
Chair of the U.K. Council of IYF; Director of the British Telecommunication Forum

I am very happy to be chairing this seminar on families, on looking at what has happened during IYF, and on discussing how to continue working for families. Let me express many congratulations and wishes to your Committee, and also to the United Nations at that time of unprecedented problems.

Often I am asked, what is the outcome of the International Year of Families? It seems to me that the intentions of the UN and those who worked for it, were that it should just be a beginning and that actions should follow. In this Seminar we have a programme with experts, with people with experience in the practical field of family work. Focussing on what is really happening in families and undertaking practical actions is needed to be done in the time after IYF.

In my own country, the U.K., IYF was immensely important. Not just because it raised the awareness of the realities of families, of all the diverse sorts of families that make up family life in all of our countries; it gave a better idea about the sort of life, the sort of problems, about the hopes and the fears, and above all the pressures that are on families in the mid-1990ies. In the U.K. there was an immense emphasis on the role of parents, and the pressures we have as parents, and in many cases, as parents as well as carers for the elderly and the young at the same time. Fathers also came into the spotlight, not before time!

But most of all the awareness was strengthened that families are to survive and to thrive, even if they have to cope with the huge pressures of rising unemployment and, as in the EU countries, of cutting social budgets; also with other problems like social exclusion and racism. It became more clear than ever, that we need to invest into families, and to focus more on prevention than we have done before.

The need for communication within families and about families came clearly out as another issue in our agenda. At all levels there should be more collaboration, more coordination and more communication. In my new role as the director of the British Telecommunications Forum I know how important communication is to our existence. The Forum took up three themes last year, one on the balance between our world of work and our personal and family lives; the other one on how we are relating within our families, the third on communication across generations. Effective interpersonal communication is absolutely the root of how we develop, how we nurture and how we strengthen our relationships within our families.

This seminar is about communicating. It is about communicating with each other, about talking as well as listening, and about passing on our experiences to the world outside.

WELCOMING ADDRESS OF THE AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS

Dr. Sonja Moser

Ladies and gentlemen,

Many thanks for your invitation to speak at this seminar. Let me also express many thanks for all your support you gave and still give to me and to the concerns of families. What we heard just now, that more communication and more coordination has to be practiced for families, is one of the wishes I have always had and tried to realize.

Austria attaches enormous importance to the role and the functions of families in society, at the national, international, and the grass-roots levels. Families are considered main contributors to and beneficiaries of a wholesome development process. This is why Austria has taken a leading role in family promotion, as a member state of the UN, and as a partner and supporter of NGOs at international and national levels. This is why I am delighted to be here to welcome you to this important event on the follow-up to the IYF which the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family has organized.

Back in 1989, Austria was an original sponsor of the General Assembly Resolution proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family which set the framework for its effective observance. At both international and grass-roots levels Austria gave substantial support to the Executive Secretariat for IYF of your Committee; this demonstrates our commitment to the able promotion of the family as the basic unit of society, as well as our appreciation of the work of NGOs as advocators and mobilizers of a pro-family movement.

This Seminar and many other activities prove that your work bears fruit for this important follow-up of IYF. I am most encouraged to see the wide participation today from all continents and I am sure that you will continue to be the ambassadors and multipliers of the message of IYF and an ongoing pro-family process. You are initiators, you share your experiences and develop new ideas and actions for families while also promoting the well-being of their individual members. I am convinced that this meeting will be a valuable source of new partnerships, and give impetus for actions for and with families in the future.

Let me welcome you wholeheartedly to Austria and let me wish you a most fruitful and pleasant exchange and every success in your important deliberations, and may your invaluable work for families grow ever stronger!

PART I:

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF THE IYF PROCESS

KEYNOTE:

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY: TASKS AND CHALLENGES

Mr. George Puthuppally, Officer-inCharge, UN-IYF Secretariat

Honourable Minister,
Chairman of the Committee,
Chairperson of the Seminar,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Like several other IYF events, this Seminar is taking place due to the uncompromising commitment and dedication of a group of dynamic and visionary volunteers, gathered in the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family. As someone who has been exposed to their perseverance and effectiveness at the grass-roots working level all I can do is to pay a most sincere tribute to them.

That IYF has been a resounding success is due to you and the NGOs that you represent: You have initiated it, you have been its driving force; you have been among its most important global partners; and you have been its most significant actors, globally, nationally and locally. We in the IYF Secretariat have been priviledged to have been partners and participants in this family movement, in unison with you, with the Member States and the other world-wide IYF partners.

I extend to each one of you congratulations on your contributions and achievements. These have ranged from small, simple, but most effective leaflets, to the World Forum Launching the IYF. Particularly I extend felicitations to my friend Dennis Callagy for his able and effective stewardship of this Committee, and to Monica Tupay, the most dynamic and the most devoted of all persons, and to all others, present and not present. Thanks to you and your colleagues all over the world, the International Year of the Family has also been a demonstration of the strengths of the non-governmental organizations.

Families - the politics of the 1990s

As we gather here today for what I may term the closing "IYF act", I wish to recall two statements made at the turn of the decade. First, in 1991, the President of the Family Research Council of the United States of America, Gary L. Bauer, stated in a congressional hearing: "I am convinced that the politics of saving the family will be the politics of the 90's". Just months later, in his 1992 State of the Union Address, President George Bush declared: "Family matters; we must strengthen the family - because it is the family that has the greatest bearing on our future".

A few years have elapsed since then, and in between the IYF has been prepared for, observed world-wide and the basic groundwork laid for its long-term follow-up. Today, the International Year of the Family is history. In its course, the Year has indeed firmly established that "family matters"; that "the politics of saving the family will be the politics of the 90s" and beyond.

The impact of IYF

In retrospect, the IYF has released an outpouring of activities all over the world in support of the basic social unit. The Year has firmly established that families are basic to sustainable development and social progress. The interrelationship of families to society is more clearly understood and appreciated, including their role as agents of development and as providers and consumers of services. New concepts such as family-impact consideration, democratic families and family-friendly societies have become important legacies of the Year. There is greater awareness of the extent and ways in which policy decisions affect families. Moreover the Year has also been a valuable instrument for advancing human rights within the family, equal rights and responsibilities of individual members of families, gender equality, the role of the father, protection and development of children, increased sensitivity to problems within families, including gender and generational inequalities, distribution of resources and violations of human rights.

The Year has bequeathed to us a rich legacy of accomplishments. It remains the task ahead of us to keep the focus on families and to "act family" beyond IYF; to steer clear of ideological confrontations and promote a functional approach to families.

The development perspective

IYF was observed on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It formed an integral element of a process of refining the concepts and mechanisms of development and social progress. A renewed emphasis is being given to social development. As the Secretary-General stated in "An Agenda for Development", it should be recognized as the foremost and most far-reaching task of our time. This renewed concern for social development is vibrating thoughout the recommendations of the major conferences of the 1990s. As a result, peace, economy, the environment, social justice and democracy are now viewed as integral components of development.

This newly emerging global concept calls for a human-centred "culture of development", with the human person at its centre. Families place people first in development efforts. The Year's preparations and observances were guided precisely by this perspective. So also, family issues were extensively covered by the global conferences and the agendas, plans and programmes of actions emanating from them.

The global conferences

The World Summit for Children in New York promoted commitment, at the highest political level, to goals and strategies for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children. The summit adopted the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration in the 1990s. Both documents clearly enunciate the importance of the family for the growth and well-being of all its members, particularly children.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, served notice that environment permeates all aspects of development; that for sustainable development to succeed, it must become the concern and commitment of all segments of society, including families; that in order to secure the future of our planet, all actors, including households, must change the way they behave. The Agenda 21, adopted by the Conference, stresses the role of households as consumers and makes several proposals relating to family welfare, family credit schemes, the responsible planning of family size and responsible parenthood.

The second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna enshrined the rights of the individual as the paramount value and cornerstone of development. The Vienna Declaration

and Programme of Action adopted by the Conference stressed the need to ensure the protection of the individual's rights in the context of family relationships and to address discrimination and the denial of equal rights of family members. The Conference also pointed out the positive role families could play in promoting respect, learning and practice of basic human rights.

The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo addressed family issues extensively. Its Programme of Action reaffirms the family as the basic unit of society and contains a chapter on "the family, its roles, rights, composition and structure". The Programme's chapter on "gender equality, equity and empowerment of women" identifies other objectives and actions of direct relevance to the family.

The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen formulated policies and measures to alleviate poverty, to expand productive employment and to enhance social integration. Based on ten solemn commitments, the Copenhagen Declaration states that the goals and objectives of social development require continuous efforts to reduce and eliminate major sources of social distress and instability for the family and for society. The Declaration and Programme of Action call for fostering policies that address various aspects of family life, such as enabling people to combine their paid work with their family responsibilities; recognizing the central role of the family in social integration, promoting changes in attitudes, structures, policies, laws and practices in order to eliminate all obstacles to human dignity, equality and equity in the family and in society; and promoting equal partnership between men and women in the family, community life and society. The Declaration also emphasizes the shared responsibility of men and women in the care of children and support for older family members, and calls for men's active involvement in responsible parenthood and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour.

And, most recently, the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted by the Forth World Conference on Women, reflects family aspects as they relate to gender equality in people-oriented development and advancement of women. The Platform defines five strategic goals to deal with critical areas of concern, all of which have special relevance to equality in the family.

Finally, this process will culminate at the Second World Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul, in June 1996, which is also expected to address the related family dimensions.

The challenges

In the coordinated efforts to implement those international declarations and plans, families should continue to receive adequate attention. It is to be reminded constantly that whereas the Year has been a resounding success, it remains a successful beginning of a long process. It has simply been a major event in a long-term process of forging family-friendly societies, where individuals, communities and nations are strengthened through families. Numerous critical tasks remain to be addressed.

In his report to the General Assembly on the observance of the Year, the Secretary-General has made a number of specific proposals in this regard, which should constitute basic foundations for long-term action on families. These include, among others:

First, enlisting the participation of all segments of society in pro-family action. These segments include family associations, other grass-roots and local networks, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The culture of partnership with non-governmental organizations should be reinforced and their work facilitated;

Second, the refinement and integration of a family-perspective in development efforts and a family-impact consideration in policies and programmes. This should lead to taking due account of the impact on families of all policies, programmes and legislation;

Third, political commitment at the highest levels, as well as adequate resource allocations, formal infrastructures and institutional arrangements, personnel development and training. This may be facilitated by the elaboration of a long-term national plan of action on families;

Fourth, clear establishment of priority substantive concerns and goals for long-term action regarding families. The experience of the Year suggests that these could include: reinforcing the interrelationship between family well-being and sustainable development; facilitating societal conditions that are supportive of families; promoting families based on partnership and democracy; equal sharing of rights and responsibilities; enabling reconciliation of family and work responsibilities; and assisting families and family members in difficult circumstances;

Fifth, constructive activities at the regional and international levels. Major areas of focus could be exchange of information and experience, mobilization of resources and expertise, provision of technical assistance, and promotion of networks and partnerships in support of families.

Families stand at the crossroads of past and present, binding generations in joint efforts to cope with the omnipresent challenges of everyday life. Notwithstanding the Year and its achievements, the present condition of the world's families is far from satisfactory. They are under pressure everywhere, only too frequently to the point of break-down.

On the on hand, in our present world, humanity has enormous resources, knowledge and technologies at its disposal. Despite these potential means to meet the needs of all, families continue to be afflicted by poverty, hunger, homelessness, disease and social exclusion. The disparity between the rich and the poor continues to grow. Peace, development, social stability and progress are being threatened by new sources of conflict. The recent socio-political transitions in many countries have placed millions of families in totally alien situations, left to themselves without support to survive under the emerging mechanisms of market economies. The current number of refugee families is unprecedented in history. Many families, especially those headed by single-parent women, find the constant need to balance work and familial responsibilities to be among the most demanding aspects of daily life.

Pro-family action

On the other hand, other severe problems become manifest with disturbing frequency inside families themselves. Domestic violence, child neglect and abuse, and violation of human rights are examples of crucial problems within families.

Both kinds of issues should be addressed. They call for a thorough assessment of our approaches to ameliorate them. They require a readiness to recognize that no problem is so simple that it can be dismissed as something every family can solve for themselves, yet not so complex that solutions are impossible.

The IYF has given societies a starting point to engage in a meaningful and reasonable dialogue and to initiate concrete action, together with families. As a host of specific problems compete for attention and action, priorities are to be established, which should include initiatives to address human rights violations in families and to eradicate domestic violence; the value of the family must be utilized for achieving gender equality, the reduction of poverty and unemployment, and ensuring the well-being of disadvantaged members of society. From its highest to its most basic level, the human family must be united in its dedication to a sustainable future for all the peoples of the world. The International Year of the Family has provided a window of opportunity that should not and must not, be missed.

In proclaiming the Year, the General Assembly provided a mandate to the UN Secretariat to undertake specific facilitative measures. The IYF Secretariat has now completed those mandates. These included setting a stage for an effective long-term follow-up to the Year. Precisely with this objective, the Secretariat has endeavoured to prepare an Indicative Guide for Action on Family Issues. The Guide is based on the principles and objectives of the Year and brings together the rich experience of its world-wide observance. I am pleased to present to you today the Guide, as a specific contribution for promoting future work on behalf of families. Also presented to you is a Compilation of Family-Specific Provisions contained in the Recommendations of the Global Conferences of the 1990s.

During its fiftieth session, the General Assembly was providing further direction for future work regarding families. In his proposals for the 1996-1997 programme-budget, the Secretary-General has included provisions for the continuation of the sub-programme on families, which would focus on a facilitative role. This will be carried out by the Social Policy and Development Division of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in New York.

With the completion of the IYF mandates, the UN sub-programme on families enters a new phase. Attention will now be concentrated, far more than before, on action at the national and local levels, through Governments and other partners, significantly the non-governmental organizations. This will be a basic challenge for the future. I am convinced that in NGOs, families have a most reliable partner in ensuring that strengthening families is a viable perspective for the future, into the third millenium. As we embark upon a creative aftermath of the International Year of the Familes, our strength can be acting in concert, in a global alliance for families.

I wish you every success in your most important deliberations.

PANEL

IYF PROJECTS AND EXPERIENCES: THE IMPACT OF LOCAL LEVEL ACTION. NGOS AND GOVERNMENTS PRESENT THEIR POINTS OF VIEW

Mrs. Sally Huemmert
The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, Canada

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to share the experiences of IYF in Alberta with you. The International Year of the Family came very timely for Alberta, as it provided additional impetus to a kind of work that was underway as a result of the establishment of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families and its mandate to advise government of the impact of policies and programmes on Alberta families.

Four years prior to IYF, we had launched a high level provincial conference, hosted by our Lieutenant-Governor, where issues of concern to families were discussed by 500 delegates who represented NGOs and local associations. Many recommendations were made there, the most significant of which was to develop a Family Policy Grid against which all government policies and programmes could be asessed for their impact on families. The policy grid was in place and approved by the Alberta cabinet before the beginning of IYF. We had also undertaken one round of consultations at the local level. Over 3.000 Albertans participated and contributed to the development of an agenda for action which addressed eight key areas of concern for families.

Thus the impact of IYF in Alberta was enhanced through
- a mechanism which was in place and provided a focus for activities in the province;
- the previous groundwork that was already laid and had created a context for IYF;
- the coalitions that were established among NGOs who were ready to pick up on the increased interest and focus on families;
- the extensive communications that had been initiated with communities;
- political support and actions of Government leaders for the family agenda.

As a result, there was a high amount of energy, particularly at the local level. Despite the lack of any significant resources committed to the Year, there were 1.000 registered events, over 35.000 volunteers and over four million participants and 53 designated corporate partners. Not all of these activities were specifically declared as IYF events, but all incorporated the family theme. For example it was agreed, that First Night Festival, an alcohol-free celebration to welcome the New Year, would kick off IYF in Alberta and use the logo, even though those attending would not necessarily all have been aware of the particular IYF message. On the whole, 53% of Albertans indicated knowledge about the Year, and 39% reported that they knew about it as a result of community events.

The planning started with NGO and grassroots forums to discuss strategies. The overall consensus was that the focus should be primarily oriented on addressing issues and policies and less on celebratory and promotional activities (although those were included as well).

What has been the impact?

While that is not an easy question to answer definitively, there are indications of changes which can be attributed to the increased attention to families. Some of these are:

1. Enhanced commitment by government to develop policies and programmes that are family supportive and family friendly. One of the consistent themes that emerged during our

consultation process with Albertans was their concern that services and programmes of government are non-responsive to the needs of families. The cabinet of the Alberta government endorsed the principles of the Family Policy Grid and agreed to review their actions aginst these principles. There have been major reform initiatives underway in Alberta and clear indications of changes that put families at the centre. This process, as a result of extensive public input, has been documented in our report on proposed changes, entitled "Meeting Family Needs".

For example, in the area of child and family services there is a commitment to local control, better integrated services and a stronger focus on family preservation rather than apprehension of children. Another significant area for concern was taxation policies and their impact on families; the government responded to our recommendations, in this area, by taking up the issue with the Federal Finance Minister.

2. Enhanced public dialogue and awareness. Perhaps this is the most apparent legacy of IYF. There was extensive public involvement in the consultation processes despite the contentious nature of debate that surrounds any discussions about families: definition of "family", rights of children vs. authority of parents, extent of government intervention and "social engineering", etc. It was heartening to discover so much middle ground and synergy especially with the diversity of participants. Out of these consultations new advocacy groups and new coalitions have emerged.

3. More family focused curricula. Schools are increasingly responding to the public demand for a stronger role for families in the educational process, and a more family-focused curriculum.

4. Increased role of faith communities. Churches, synagogues and religious organizations have picked up the family banner and awakened to the important role they can play in addressing family issues and concerns. This has been particularly evident in the Roman Catholic Church which held a synod on the family.

5. A role for municipalities. While the majority of municipalities in Alberta formally proclaimed the Year, only a small number undertook a serious review of their programmes. The Council developed a Family Friendly Community Checklist to assist with this process.

6. A role for workplaces. There is some evidence of increased attention to workplace policies that recognize and reflect family realities. However, there is little evidence available to suggest that there have been significant changes in this area.

But it has been a good start even though we have a long way to go before the necessary changes are made which will truly sustain family life.

What is needed?

1. A stronger role for media in reflecting family realities. In a recent Canada-wide survey of families, 67% reported a high level of satisfaction and happiness with their own families, yet about the same number reported that they believe most other families are in great difficulty.

The negative messages about family life, family dysfunction and family breakdown are loud and clear but not the more hopeful messages reflecting the more positive reality for families as evidenced by our demographic as well as survey data.

2. A stronger voice for families. We still do not have a strong constituency that advocates family issues and concerns, and speaks for the great majority of families and, in particular, addresses that "middle ground" of consensus which does exist.

3. More alliances and partnerships. There is much that can be done by any one organization, but the synergistic effect of developing strong alliances and partnerships, is where the power lies in really making a difference for families.

4. Improved social marketing. Too much attention is paid to producing information and not enough to communicating it. We can learn a lot about marketing information and ideas from those in the business of selling products and services. It has to start by identifying our "customers". What are their issues, needs and aspirations? How can we help to give voice to their concerns?

5. More policy driven research. Politicians need effective public participation and involvement as well as input and advice from researchers on reasonable options and possible consequences of those options. They need a better translation of available research and more information about "best practices" based on sound research.

6. More attention to outcomes. While we can make guesses about the potential consequences of policies and programmes on families, there are unintended consequences that must be monitored. Programme evaluation is not sufficient. Measures of family well-being are needed so we can assess how we are doing compared to other jurisdictions. We need a clear, consistent and simple statement of family well-being to assist in planning, determining programme priorities and realigning resources in response to change in areas such as rising rates of teen suicides, school drop outs, extent of family violence, family income, marriage, divorce, etc. We must be able to answer the question, is what we are doing working?

7. More local control. A flexible process is essential, with leadership and involvement at the local level which addresses the unique community context and its specific needs and strengths.

8. Public accountability. Organizations that forget who they are serving will be in jeopardy. Public accountability requires clear feedback and information on progress being made, on results of public input. Organizations have to provide these; their agenda or political orientation needs to be upfront, and their values and beliefs made more transparent.

9. A high level of respect and sensitivity to individual perspectives. We must understand and appreciate the reality of people that come before us so that we can understand why they look at the world the way they do. History is not only the evolution of technology but also the evolution of thought. We can contribute to that in a positive and healing way which we need in our families, our countries and our world.

10. An ongoing process. I believe that the really significant change comes, not as a result of a few people doing big things, but of a lot of people doing little things. Through the efforts of each of us, together we can be stronger, keep the focus on families and keep the momentum going for the benefit of all of us.

Fatimah Saad
National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia

The country I come from is almost on the other side of the world. Your invitation to share with you its experiences and vision in dealing with family matters is not only significant to me personally and to my country, Malaysia, but also to Asia in general.

Malaysia is a young and rapidly developing country. It consists of Peninsular Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in the island of Borneo. It has Thailand as its Northern neighbor,

Indonesia to the West, Singapore to the South and the Philippines to the East. It lies entirely in the tropics, with sunshine all the year except for the rainy season.

Malaysia is a democratic country with a constitutional monarch as the head. Kuala Lumpur is the seat of Parliament. It is a heterogeneous society with three main races, the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. Although Islam is the official religion, freedom of worship and cultural practice is guaranteed under the constitution. Bahasa Malaysia is the offcial language, but other languages and dialects, including English, Mandarin, Cantonese, and others are widely spoken. The many ethnic groups each with its distinct cultural and social heritage give the country a unique background of colour and diversity. The various races mingle freely, each harmoniously retaining its own traditions and customs.

The population is estimated at 19.7 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.6%. Malaysia has a youthful population with 36.1% below 15 years. The average family size is around 4.8. Although once the system of extended families was the norm, the majority of the families today are nuclear. This feature is attributable to the rapid industrialization and urbanization processes of the past two decades.

As you can see, with a young population, rapid urbanization and industrialization, a rather high fertility rate and a large influx of immigrants, Malaysia has certainly its share of social problems to deal with now and in the future. Let me highlight to you some of the challenges that we are confronted with today which somehow affect family life.

Challenges to family life

The Malaysian economy has diversified from an agro-based subsistence living and raw material producing country to a rapidly industrializing economy and exporter of finished products. Consequently, the Gross National Product per capita has increased substantially, and Malaysia today is emerging as a New Industrialized Country (NIC). The economic progress subsequently has resulted in changing the social and demographic fabric.

The enhanced status of women and their greater participation in the labour force, coupled with improved quality of life, have affected families. The increase in female employment outside the home, especially among married women, has resulted in their reduced availability for household tasks, including those of caring for the children and the elderly. Studies conducted in 1988 reveal that 44% of couples are both working, while 54% of households depend on male single wage earners. This requires proper and adequte child care facilities.

With almost half of the families having both husband and wife working, the stress and challenges of their daily routine to some extent affect marriage stability. Employment opportunities are also responsible for the disintegration of the traditional family system. Industrialization has a magnetic effect on youths, to seek employment away from home thus dislodging the traditional cohesional form of the family.

There are also problems with restless young people who are taking up negative lifestyles, leading e.g. to drug and substance abuse, lack of discipline in schools, juvenile delinquancy, sexually transmitted disease, etc.

In spite of all these problems, we are not dismayed, in fact we double our efforts to address the problems. We are very fortunate that the government has realized the important role of the family as early as in the 1980s, when it amended its Act for the National Family Planning Programme and changed the Board into the National Population and Family Development Board. Various programmes and activities were undertaken then, such as developing curricula for parenting courses, the conduction of psycho-social research on the family, the production of magazines and audio-visual materials. Some of these programmes were experimental and at

their infancy stage, but by the early 90s the programmes and techniques became more matured and are taking shape more clearly.

The Malaysian Government has been very concerned at the emerging issues in the country and their influence on the family institution. Strategies for strengthening the family have been developed and measures provided by means of which family members can seek protection and redress from abuse and violence. The main objective of Malaysia's family policy is to increase awareness, knowledge and practice of a healthy, stable and harmonious family life. In addition, the National Population Policy's main objective is to create a quality population through the strengthening of the family institution. Efforts are geared towards producing citizens imbued with knowledge and skills, with strong spiritual and moral values, dedication, resilience, responsibility and innovativenes.

The most significant step to mark the ultimate recognition of the Malaysian Government of the family institution was the declaration of November 11 of every year as the National Family Day in 1990. The theme of that year was "My Family, my Hope".

The observance of the International Year of the Family further reinforced the values and commitments the Malaysian Government and its people attribute to the family. IYF has indeed managed and mobilized people at all levels. The Prime Minister was the patron of IYF, the Deputy Prime Minister launched the International Day of Families, 15th of May of that year. His Majesty the King and several ministers were involved in the various types of activities. The local state governments also contributed their share, the launching in the 14 states being done either by the Head of State or the Sultan or King. The IYF programmes have been integrated into the yearly state programmes.

The private sector's participation since the proclamation of the National Family Day has been overwhelming, either by contributions of money or in kind and other resources. These were intensified during the IYF celebrations. I would like to mention just two significant examples: the sponsorship of a two year campaign on family values on TV by a major local bank, and the "billboard campaign" throughout the country, organized by another private company.

The NGOs have been another strong supporter, directly and indirectly, on all programmes and activities in the IYF. The media played a very active part in publicizing IYF events. The news coverage of the activities was overwhelming. A special supplement was printed by two popular dailies during the launching of the IYF, television and radio provided ample airtime for IYF events, jingles and IYF songs were played throughout the Year.

Results of IYF

I think the most important results of the IYF activities are the continuity and strengthening of the existing programmes and activities, as well as the development of new ones on behalf of the family. I would like to list some of them:

i. Malaysia finally joined the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in conjunction with IYF.
ii. Two nationwide campaigns and programmes were initiated to promote the strengthening of the family institution: one is the Rumahku Syurgaku (My Home My Heaven) campaign; the other one is the Jaya Waris (Successful Heritage, or Successful Generation) programme, which is to be launched early in 1996 and will further emphasize the noble values of parenting for resolving various problems, especially those concerning the degradation of moral values among young people.
iii. The national Population and Family Development Board, which is the focal point for IYF, has included a proposal to establish an Institute of Family Development into the 7th Malaysian Plan, to be carried out from 1996-2000.

iv. It has also been observed that many government agencies and private companies are organizing the Family Day for their staff. This is an obvious indication that the idea of a Family Day has been accepted and integrated as part of the social obligations of these organizations.
v. Perhaps the most important outcome of the IYF is the step taken by the government to formulate a National Plan of Action for Families. This plan of Action is the result of suggestions, recommendations and findings from the various national conferences and workshops held during the IYF.

With the commitment of the Government and the support of the people, Malaysia could hope for a brighter future as far as families are concerned. Even though it is not going to be an easy task, we will certainly continue to increase our efforts for the improvement not only of the Malaysian families but also for the citizens of the world.

Janet Cunningham
Scripture Union Africa, Zimbabwe

I feel it as a priviledge to tell you briefly on the impact of the IYF on my own nation of Zimbabwe and on the 41 countries in which Scripture Union operates in Africa.

There is an African riddle that asks a husband: "If you were walking along a bush path followed by your wife and your mother, and a lion jumped out of the bush and you could only save one of them, which one would you save?" The traditional answer is that he would save his mother because he can always get another wife.

I do not think that this answer would be satisfactory nowadays. However, to be effective in any community, one needs to understand deeply the roots of the community, its folklore, its riddles, its customs, its language, its traditions. Too often cultural suppositions and programmes from a more affluent and sophisticated society are imposed on those who are considered less furtunate. There is a psychological imperialism and often even an assumption that West is best or North is noteworthy.

In Africa, Scripture Union has insisted that nationals of each country should take the leadership and initiative and be given the skills and training required. For this reason it is well established and widely accepted by government and society leaders, in educational programmes and by the churches and the people. It operates with a small full-time staff who motivate and train a large number of voluntary workers. Before the IYF Scripture Union had already laid a srong foundation in family work and was ready to make use of the stimulus provided by the International Year of the Family.

When I returned from the NGO Malta Forum Launching IYF I spoke to a number of leaders in Zimbabwe. Dr. John Makumbe, head of the Political Science Department at the University of Zimbabwe, took the initiative to form the Zimbabwe Family Association. The purpose was to bring together all those concerned about the social, political and economic issues which affect families in Zimbabwe and to make full use of the International Year of the Family.

Right at the outset of the Year one of the major hotel chains of Zimbabwe took over a launching function with an IYF Fashion Show promoting IYF clothing, posters to raise awareness of family issues, and a family entertainment evening. The success of this event led to a weekly prime time radio programme devoted to the discussion and promotion of family values. This programme continued throughout the Year of the Family, and through most of the following year.

Other events followed. There was a luncheon for all the heads of schools (both junior and high schools) of one of the major cities, together with their head students, where we were able to share the IYF findings and visions. Essay writing, drama, art, music, colouring competitions, a great variety of creative ideas to promote IYF during 1994 were encouraged in the schools. The Zimbabwe Family Association produced leaflets with ideas for action in all sectors of society: for local government, commerce, industry, professional groups, rural communities and so on. The association called together leaders from these sectors to form working groups to initiate action.

Today Scripture Union is responding not only to the IYF call to rebuild the smallest democracy at the heart of society but also to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. But HIV/AIDS is seen as a symptom of the problem, not the cause of it. The root problem is the breakdown of family life and the loss of traditional and Christian moral values. More and more Governments and NGOs are realizing that behaviour change is the most essential strategy in overcoming the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There has also been a strong realisation that Christianity has an essential role. It was Martin Luther King who said: "Christians should not be thermometers that merely record and reflect the temperature of public opinion. Christians should be thermostats - responsible for setting the temperature or standards of society".

In many countries in Africa, there is a growing recognition by politicians, community and church leaders of the importance of the marriage bond for society. The Minister of Health in Zimbabwe often says that there is an answer to AIDS that has no costs or side effects: "It is mutually faithful life long marriage partnerships". This approach furthermore fits with the roots of culture and tradition in Africa. So Scripture Union's "Spiral Lifeskills Programme" has found wide and ready acceptance.

For example, in the Ghana Parliament when the Minister of Education was asked what his ministry was doing on AIDS prevention education in schools, he replied: "We are supporting the SU programme". This statement in Parliament was followed by the training of Education Officers from all the ten regions of Ghana. Similarly, in Zimbabwe the Ministry of Education and Culture has given approval to the Lifeskills courses being taught in the schools. This year the Design for the Family teams have been into 500 schools in Zimbabwe and discussed Lifeskills with about 40 000 young people. Similar developments are taking place in the 22 countries in which SU's Spiral programme has been established.

The Spiral Programme starts with the "Adventure Unlimited" series for 10-12 olds. This is the key age group for HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. Professor Rwomushana of the Uganda AIDS Commission says: "They are effectively an AIDS free generation and a window of hope in the AIDS disaster. Our most important strategy is to widen this window of hope." Then there is "Choose Freedom" for teenagers in high schools, colleges and universities.

Both these courses approach HIV/AIDS prevention from a perspective that encompasses life in all its relationships. Children and young people are encouraged to form their own life values and attitudes through a participatory approach that includes such things as games, role-plays, dramas, discussion and debate. The emphasis is not on the problems of life but on the joy, privilege and sheer adventure of living. It is positive motivation, wholesome values and positive peer pressure that produce effective behaviour change.

The next stage of the Lifeskills Spiral is a marriage preparation course. Leaders are community volunteers trained to assist those at this stage of life. Then family values are reinforced by Marriage Weekends. These have found enthusiastic acceptance. We have had particularly outstanding Marriage Weekends in Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia.

Last in the Spiral Programme come the Positive Parenting Seminars. These are either based on the school community or on local communities. These again have found an immense response.

So often people are given training in every aspect of life except that of family and parenting! Parents are left grappling in the dark, wanting the best for their families but not having the skills and the know-how. We have found that large numbers will attend these seminars in a wide variety of communities.

Let me conclude by telling you a story. Our teams had been running their seminars in a very drought stricken and poor area in the South of Zimbabwe. They saw the children blossom and become very much more confident as they were given skills to cope with life and to accept themselves. A few months later I was visiting this community with some tourists to the country when one of the village girls came to our group. With a radiant smile she said to me, a complete stranger: "I am special, I am God made and God does not make junk". I was very pleased; but when I said that I knew where she had learnt that she was amazed. That whole community has really accepted their worth and received new hope and motivation.

I have been very encouraged to hear that the stimulus given to thought and discussion on family life throughout the world by the IYF may now develop into a Decade of the Family. Our meetings with colleagues in other countries showed clearly that there was a consensus that it would be a pity to cut such endeavours short at the end of one year. We need the continuing support from the world body in order to receive the necessary local support for action.

I was therefore delighted when the Secretariat called for this Decade of the Family, and I do want to thank you most sincerely for your hard work and for what has meant to us so much in many of the countries of Africa.

(Ms. Cunningham, besides displaying books and leaflets on the work of her movement, also presented a video which was shown during the lunch break.)

Maria Elena de Mata
International Association of Charities; Guatemala

The International Association of Charities (AIC) is one of the three foundations set up by St. Vincent de Paul in the early 17th century, (the other ones being the congregation of priests called the Lazarists, and the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity, who mainly work in hospitals); originally called "Les Dames de la Charité" (Ladies of Charity) they were meant from the start and by constitution as a lay women's organization to work with the poor and combat poverty. Already in the 17th century the association took up an international character when groups of ladies were formed in Poland and Italy to act along the same principles.

Reorganized in the 1970s under a new and more modern appellation, AIC is active today in 43 countries with 250.000 voluntary members who work together and in solidarity with the poor against poverty and injustice, in order to improve their quality of life. Lately it has played an active part as an NGO in New York, Vienna, Paris and Strasbourg, speaking for the destitutes and defending their rights to a decent and dignified life.

Due to the importance that AIC gave to the International Year of the Family, the topic of its General Assembly held 1994 in Guatemala was "Families, Poverty and Human Rights: Towards a Culture of Solidarity and Self-Achievement". AIC volunteers reaffirmed their involvement in the fight against poverty in their commitment to work directly with families in the situation of poverty. According to the teachings of St. Vincent, they apply the principle of self-achievement, which respects their dignity and their culture.

The International Year of the Family caused a great impact in Latin America, and many positive results were obtained. Latin America is a region rich in historical tradition, with a multicultural and multilingual population of 457 million people, and with a presence of local Indians in most of its countries. In the world context, Latin America is considered one of the poorest regions, which is due to a system of injustice and exclusion; the violation of Human Rights is both cause and effect of poverty.

Latin America, as well as other areas of the world, is undergoing an intense economical, social and moral crisis, which affects families in general. There is a high indicator of family disintegration, especially in the cities. This is less evident in rural areas, due to the cultural values and traditions of the people. A well known characteristic of Latin America is its "macho society", in which the man imposes himself on the woman. Although the family is backed by Human Rights, it is not so in practice. Women and children are the ones who suffer most from injustice and discrimination.

Guatemala in Central America, where I come from, is a rich country, inhabited by poor people. It is rich in history, culture, traditions and beautiful scenery. There are 23 ethnic groups which comprise 70% of the population, most of them are direct descendants of the rich Maya culture. But today they are poor. 75% of its 10 million population go to sleep hungry every night, because of social injustice and due to more than 30 years of internal war.

Hunger exists. But not only hunger for bread, also for solidarity,, justice, opportunities, education, peace. And also hunger for God. Poverty advances. Poverty is almost the same anywhere, what changes are the places and the people who suffer.

AIC projects

In this frame of reference, the AIC volunteers are developing so called Self Achievement Projects which are accepted by the poor with enthusiasm as a personal challenge. They are devised as processes through which people discover their own capabilities and qualities and their dignity. They learn to become the subjects of their own development and their families' as well, as part of the integral and sustainable development of their community. All this contributes to the eradication of poverty.

The following Family Projects are under process in Guatemala. Similar ones are being developed by volunteers in other countries of Latin America. The similarity in action is possible due to the Operational Guidelines of our organization: Formation - Solidarity - Self-Achievement - Communication. These principles help us to follow a common path in our work, thus achieving unity in the diversity.

Direct contact with the poor at the grass roots level and on their own ground is essential. It helps us to understand their reality, their sorrows and their joys, too. At the same time it gives them the opportunity to know us, to accept us, and to have confidence in us and to participate in the elaboration and development of programmes. We try to set actions in favor of what may be called social prevention. This, we feel, is very important in the case of families for the eradication of poverty.

I would like to report on a number of seminars we hold with varying concrete objectives:

- In marginal areas surrounding cities we put up training workshops and Integral Development Centers, to promote ideals, attitudes and the necessary skills-training in women, so they can effectively accomplish their mission in the family and in society.

- We initiate and advocate housing projects for disadvantaged families; the objective is to furnish low-cost housing on a rental basis to poor families for five years, during which they can improve their quality of life. This is achieved by adult education and training for better job

opportunities which is also accompanied by lectures in human, moral and social values. We also include children, which we found out is very important.

- In our ambulatory health project for poor sick pople, we also try to increase sensibility of the importance of having a united family, which also includes old people's rights to remain at home and to be treated with love and respect. Frequent volunteer and doctors' visits provide medical and caretaking services in the homes.

- We also undertake small agricultural family business projects and give guidance for the organization and administration of small family business. The objective is to maintain the unity of the family through common interests in their work, and better knowledge in agricultural and commercial methods. This development of technical and human values promotes family integration.

- There is also a family project of integral and sustainable development in the Indian community of Nebaj in Guatemala on which I want to expand a little. This project considers the culture in which the families live and aims at the development and integration of women, young people and men in the community. The process of a renewal of these Indian communities was started with 62 women, 32 "ladinas" and 30 Indians, which made it also an integral cultural project. It started with a Sewing Workshop, and in its course, many other activities were added: alphabetization was requested as a need by the women themselves. They experienced having an income of their own by selling what they sew in their homes; they rediscovered their dignity and self-confidence and the experience of more happiness. They developed solidarity with others and started feeling the obligation to teach what they have learned to other women in the community.

But even more relevant than this are the changes that took place in the mentality and the attitudes of the men in this "macho" community: they started to recognize the women's ability for their development and encouraged them to continue the programme; they found value in them, started to have faith in them and to feel proud of them.

Most satisfactorily, the community accepted and supported the project, because the revitalization of community life became visible. The Government has recognized the work of the Development Center in Nebaj, and has authorized the AIC Nebaj volunteers to request donations from national and international organizations for the project and the further benefit of the community.

These experiences are some of the many concrete actions that the AIC volunteers are developing in Guatemala and other countries of Latin America and elsewhere, which are a contribution to the re-evaluation of the family by efforts to combat their poverty. Family projects are transforming people's lives as a whole. This is a challenge, yours and mine. But I think we should leave a footprint in the world and not one that could be washed away in the years to come, and strong enough for others to follow.

PART II:

FAMILIES: INTERACTION BETWEEN INTERNAL RESOURCES AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

KEYNOTE:

CHALLENGES AND CHANCES FOR FAMILIES: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Prof.Dr. Wassilios E. Fthenakis

The situation of families in many countries of the world is characterized by tremendous changes. These have led not only to a pluralization of family structures, but also to changes in the quality of the relationships between family members, in the attitudes towards education and educational goals as well as to changes in the relationship between the generations.

In the first part of my paper I should like to mention briefly some aspects of these changes, which are meant to help us to appreciate the current problems of families. In the second part I should like to discuss some concepts, by the means of which problems of families are treated today. The third part comprises suggestions for intervention, for policy and for research. I will refer not only to the results of recent international research, but also to the results gained by all of us during the International Year of the Family.

I. Structural and qualitative aspects of change within families

Regarding the structural aspect, we are witnessing many changes. Common features in highly industrialized regions of the earth such as North America, Europe, but also countries like Japan are:

- A rise in life expectancy; according to U.N. projections, by 2025 about 28 % of women and 19 % of men will be older than 80 years in Europe;
- a decrease of families with children of minority age;
- a decline in the numbers of so-called "complete" families and also a high increase of one-parent families.

With life expectancy rising and birth rates declining, in the European region the population's proportion of children under the age of 15 is at present decreasing, dramatically so in Italy and the Netherlands, where an approximate decline of 50% in the proportion of children under 15 years within the total population is expected.

In contrast there are family scenarios in other parts of the world where a very high fertility rate - with or without the attempt of birth control supervised by the state - leads to a rapid rise in population.

In Northern and Western Europe as well as in North America, but also in other countries of the world, we are witnessing a tremendous rise in the divorce rate. In these countries about 30% to 50% of all marriages end in divorce. In contrast, the rate of divorce is relatively low in the Meditarranean countries, with Italy at the end of the divorce scale. Although the one-parent family is not a new sociological phenomenon, the reasons why it exists have changed. While in former times the death of a parent or the birth of a child out of wedlock predominantly accounted for this form of family, today divorce and separation are the main reasons for the existence of one-parent families.

In recent years the remarriage of divorced parents has led to an increase in the percentage of step-families. This has resulted in family relations which have been unknown up to now. Families which have so to speak "many parents" have come into existence, in which complicated new degrees of relationships can be found, for which we do not even have an adequate vocabulary (Furstenberg, 1987).

In the USA it is assumed that more than 80% of the children of the black population and about half of the children of the white population born in 1980 will not spend their childhood up to 18 with their natural parents, but will grow up in an alternative form of family organization. With regard to German children born in 1975, it is estimated, that in 1991 21% in the old federal states and 31% in the new federal states did not live with both natural parents. Especially the father-child relationship seems to be afflicted, which makes us warn not so much of the consequences of the absence of the father but of a fragile father-child relationship.

Recently a new facette of living in one-parent families has developed, which could become rather important in view of the changing attitudes towards marriage and family. During the eighties the percentage of unmarried mothers rearing their children on their own has risen enormously. Within this group there are in particular women who have deliberately chosen this alternative form of family. At the same time the number of non-married couples living together has increased remarkably in recent years. Children coming from these families will have to integrate different forms of family organization into their biography.

But at the moment we are not just witnessing variations concerning the structural aspects of family development. There are also qualitative changes of a psychological kind. The present situation of the family entails a change in the partners' self-concepts, in the parents' ideas about education and in the parent-child relationship.

First of all women have a new self-image. The most striking indicator of this change is that an increasing number of women are employed. This applies especially for two groups of women: single parents and women between the age of 20 and 35 years. While at present about 68% of all single mothers are employed, the group of the 20-35 year-old women show the highest rate of increase in female participation in the labour market since World War II.

Concerning parents' concepts of education, studies conducted in the eighties report on changes in educational goals, that can be summarized in the following way:"...a rise in values concerning 'self-expectation' like autonomy and independence, while values like duty, obedience and submission have dwindled during the last decades." (Schneewind, 1992).

Beside this notable change in educational goals there have also been changes in the parent-child relationship. In the countries of the European Community children have almost entirely lost their function as "helpers for old age" or as "financial prop" and they have also lost their socio-normative function, as they nowadays still have in countries like Turkey, Taiwan, Thailand and in countries with severe economic problems. Instead of that children mean joy and give meaning to their parents' lives.

The different meaning children have for their parents nowadays has also had its effects on the parent-child relationship. As parents give more consideration to their children's demands of autonomy, the parent-child relationship is taking on more and more the quality of living together as partners. The educational relationship has developed into an interactional relationship, which leads on the one hand to a more child-centered situation and on the other hand to a weakening of the parents' system (Schütze 1988).

Moreover, women and children bear the brunt of the still unsolved problem of the incompatibility of family and work. The consequences of poverty and its effects on children have been reported extensively in recent years. Poverty is a central handicap for the

development of many children and is associated with a number of other problems such as a higher rate of infant mortality, considerable intellectual deficits in pre-school years, slower progress at school, and socio-emotional behaviour problems including fear, social retreat, aggression and delinquency, low self-esteem and self-confidence.

But also other strains which families have to cope with nowadays are a focus of public discussion. These include problems of structural violence against women and children, the effects of unemployment on family members, child abuse, the increase in radical right wing groups in Europe.

Further social and especially economic problems of an unprecedented extent will have immediate consequences for families and for educational work with infants. To give an example: between the years 1981-1990 we have had the highest rate of immigration in the history of Germany. The problem of mobility is, of course, not limited to families of the European Community, it is a problem of international dimension. As a result of these changing structural and economic conditions families face increased geographical mobility and a new cultural and linguistic diversity. This in turn will lead to a restructuring of the social networks and to further changes in the lives of families.

Against this background one can design a scenario for families which is characterized by a pluralization of life styles, by discontinuity in their family development and by the need to cope with strains resulting from normative and non-normative biographical events combined with an increasing individualisation of family biographies. Geographical mobility, linguistic and cultural diversity and the reorganisation of social networks are further aspects of family life, which have become rather complex in our world at present. Families will have to integrate a much higher extent of discontinuity into their lives as well as an increasing number of normative and non-normative transitions at an individual and at a family level.

The trend of such a development can be traced back to the end of the previous century. This means that such social developments do no represent totally new facts in a progressing process of individualisation and pluralization. But what is new, I think, is the rapidity with which this process has progressed since the beginning of the eighties. This gives rise to new problems of coping with this development. The process is also accelerated by the new information and communication networks. It releases individuals gradually from orders or patterns of orientation and patterns of life course which seemed to be stable. It also confronts individuals with problems of social regulation.

An important question for all of us today is how and under what conditions the biographical changes which accompany such discontinuities can be described and conceptualized.

II. Transitions in the process of family development

In face of the change of family structures and relationships and especially with regard to the challenges which result from the integration of discontinuities for individuals and for the entire family, there is a need for an appropriate approach. At present developmental and family psychology approaches are gaining importance alongside sociological approaches: the systemic view of the family has not only become more important for the theory and practice of family therapy (Duss-Werdt & Welter-Enderlin 1980), but also for family research (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Brunner 1984, Fthenakis 1985; Kantor & Lehr 1975) and for the work of the developmental psychologists.

A system can change in two ways: on the one hand in a way in which single parameters, but not the structures of the system, continuously change like age of family members. On the other

hand in a way in which the whole system changes discontinuously and qualitatively; such a transformation is caused by a change of the outer framework and/or by restructurings immanent in the system. This qualitative change of the family system and the family members' needs to adapt to it (which can be understood as developmental tasks), can be traced in the family's cycle of life: for example to the point of the birth of the first child and also the birth of other children; during the period of preschool and school; during adolescence and the time of leaving the parental home; during the time after active parenthood ("empty nest"), and finally at the end of one's career or at the death of one's spouse. The so called life-span development perspective has become a generally accepted framework indispensible for family research. It is an approach which considers the whole cycle of life of an individual or a group of persons, for example that of the family. The advantage of such a perspective is that due to the consideration of the change in the system it can not only react to stressful events in the life course but can be used as a preparatory and preventive agent.

However, families have always had to face not only normative events in their lives but also critical events of a non-normative kind. This seems to apply increasingly for the modern family in Western Europe, as well as for families from other industrialized countries. So the problems of divorce, and also the problem of temporary or long-term unemployment imply urgent family-related questions, which are of a certain quantitative importance alongside other critical events like the birth of a handicapped child, sudden death or disease, or becoming the victim of an accident or a crime. Also events like economic depression or natural catastrophes can be rated among the critical events of life. The basic assumption of the concept of the normative and non-normative events of life is that these events are seen as stress factors which lead to a critical situation in the family and which induce a process within the family which can be described as transition.

The way such a transition is experienced depends on the coping strategies used, which at the same time are dependent on the personal, material and social resources available to the family (Fthenakis 1985). In some unfortunate cases attempts of coping can lead to an accumulation of stress factors and thus to an aggravation of the crisis (Schneewind 1985).

Hence, a central question for research, practice and politics is to find a concept that will be appropriate to adequately describe family development and family change and which opens new ways of dealing with families.

If you study the new handbooks on the research on life events, on stress, on coping, on social support or on transitions under this aspect, you will discover that various approaches are converging into a "psychology of change" (Fisher & Cooper 1990). However, in the last four years one particular concept has been emerging: the family-transition-approach. According to this concept transitions represent phases of change at an individual or family level after specific events such as the birth of a child, separation, divorce or remarriage. These transitions are characterized by intensified and accelerated learning processes which induce psychological changes and changes at the interactional level of the family system, the development of which remains open. To put it differently: a child's birth and the changes connected with it can stimulate a transition, and the need to cope with this transition leads to individual changes and to changes within the family system.

In his study on the psychology of crisis, Dieter Ulich (1985) came to conclusions which are of immediate importance for the research on transitions. His main thesis is that crises can be profitable for the development of an individual if sufficient subjective and objective coping strategies are available.

In order to illustrate this model of recent family research I should like to confine myself to one example of non-normative transition: the transition to post-divorced and remarried families, and one example of normative transition: the transition to parenthood.

As Mavis Hetherington from the University of Virginia, USA, (1989) emphasized, there has been a gradual shift in perspective in the research on divorce. Divorce is no longer considered as an atypical, or pathogenous development of the family. At present there is an attempt to view divorce and remarriage in analogy to other family transitions - not as a single event, but as a transition embedded in a row of transitions, which define the development of different family structures and the development of members within these structures. Furstenberg (1988) and others maintain that behaviour problems of children in reorganized families are not the result of difficulties in adapting to the new situation, but the results of strains linked to their parents' divorce and life in a one-parent household. In the longitudinal study of Cowan & Cowan (1992) predictors for separation and divorce could be observed shortly before or shortly after the birth of the first child. Bray and Berger (1993) have created a family development model for divorce and remarriage which identifies predictors from the first marriage to separation and divorce, single parenthood, remarriage and renewed divorce. According to these authors divorce and remarriage imply a number of marital and family transitions which are interdependent with individual and family development.

Also the step-family represents a developing system which is continually influenced by the individual life courses of each family member. This is why the developmental aspects of the step-family and single family members were integrated into a family system approach called a developmental family system model (Bray & Berger 1990).

Divorce is currently considered as a transition which implies individual and family changes as well as changes of social networks and changes within the networks of relatives. Studying the phenomenon of divorce in different cultures and considering contextual factors to a higher degree enabled family research during the last three years to assess more precisely which role such factors play. It has been shown that cultural factors, economic variables, availability of support and similar things have quite an influence on the question whether and how an individual or a family copes with a transition.

Let me bring one example (Del Carmen & Virgo 1993): if you look at the divorce models of people belonging to four different cultural groups in the USA, you will perceive four different coping strategies depending on the different cultural background: white women prefer a legal divorce and are emotioallly and/or economically supported by their parents; they make use of models of custody which do not provide equal rights for the other parent living apart from the family, and their network of relatives and their social network exert indirectly a certain pressure on the woman to remarry. A black woman prefers the model of separation and is supported by her network of relatives; due to the fact that she has always had a job, she has developed a repertoire of patterns of behaviour which provides a frame of socialization for her children that seems to be appropriate to compensating aspects of the missing father. And there is no pressure on black women to remarry. Their children can apparently cope much better with transition caused by separation than children from white American families.

Asian families have the lowest rate of divorce in the USA; in case of divorce the children are assigned in equal numbers to the two new households. This can be explained by the cultural background according to which there is always an elderly female person present in the paternal household who will look after the children if necessary. The coping model of women from the Hispanic minority is totally different. The woman separated or divorced is rejected by her relatives and does not get any support from them, she is dependent on having a job, which means that she is less available for her children and has to face more stress.

This example showing totally different ways of coping with transition outline the central importance of cultural, economic social and institutional factors in the coping process.

Let me now come back to the transition in the family developmental process, which in my opinion is the most relevant: the transition to parenthood. It is thanks to Philip and Carolyn Cowan of the University of California, Berkeley, that a model has been developed and evaluated by means of which the transition to parenthood is described as an individual transition and a family transition. According to these authors the birth of a child induces changes at the individual and at the family level. Moreover, as a consequence of this transition, the social networks and the network of relatives will change.

According to this model the contextual changes frequently described in sociological and demographic studies do not suffice to postulate transitions in the family development. Transition is rather constituted by the psychological changes of each family member following the reorganization of new roles and central relationships. Cowan & Cowan describe these psychological and interactional changes according to a model of structure and process, which involves at the individual level a reorganization of identity, a different outlook and the attempt to cope with what Erikson called emotional turmoil. Coping with the transition to parenthood implies a change of identity for the expectant father; life adopts a new meaning for him and many studies have outlined emotional problems of expectant fathers, which have remained unnoticed in many cultures. Part of the process of coping on the individual level is the perception of emotional turmoil caused by the transition. Emotional turmoil can even present itself in the shape of depression like the post partum depression of mothers. On all of these levels you can only talk of transitions if psychological changes are taking place. Fathers experiencing the transition to parenthood often grow a beard, others gain weight and quite a lot escape to their work - a high rate of fathers work overtime after the birth of their child.

But there are also changes taking place at the family level: there is a reorganization of roles: new roles are being learned and old ones wiped out. New fathers have to add the role of the father to their repertoire of roles and many divorced fathers who have looked after the child before the divorce, retreat after the divorce. There are also changes in the relationship between the partners. A number of longitudinal studies have described this process, which is accompanied by a rapid reduction of tenderness and sexuality and eventually leads to an erosion in the partnership. Transitions on the interactional level in the family system can cause emotional stress which may lead to conflicts or even violence in the family.

Coping with transition entails the learning of new patterns of behaviour which can be personally profitable and can be seen as a chance for individual and family development.

Cowan & Cowan (1991, 1992, 1995) have also pointed out that changes of this kind are not confined to the individuals and to the family level.They also extend to the social network and the network of relatives. It is typical of these tradiitions that during that period the network of friends changes. Young mothers lose contact with their old friends and build up new circles of friends. During the process of coping with a transition the quality of the relations between parents and children also changes. Parents are expected once again to offer emotional and/or financial support etc.

The question of whether and how family members cope with a transition on the whole depends to a high degree on contextual factors: I have already mentioned cultural factors; economic factors, the availability of supportive services and intervention programs, appropriate legal conditions, the new media and the rapid spreading of the electronic communication systems, institutions like schools advice centres and similar advisory organizations play an important role in coping with transitions. Moreover, the results of recent research underline the major importance of transgenerative effects: men and women who grew up in a conflict-ridden home

and whose parents were divorced undergo a high risk regarding the stability of their own marriage.

Interesting findings of the last two years make it clear that during different transitions in the family developmental process the changes which take place at the individual and family level are comparable. During transition to parenthood and the transition to the post-divorce family, the same dimensions are subject to change. It seems that the problems individuals and families have with coping with transitions become evident at an early stage in the family developmental process. Transitions represent periods in the family developmental process in which the individual and the family system is open for help.

An approach which focusses on the necessity of coping with transitions in the family developmental process is suited to recognize problems at a relatively early stage and thus to develop preventions. For if it is true that a comparable competence of coping strategies is needed for the transition to parenthood and for the transition to the post-divorced family or to the remarried family, it makes sense to strengthen these competences of parents during the transition to parenthood, which is the first reorganisation of the family system, and to offer help.

Assuming that the contextual factors which play a central role in the process of coping with transition can be identified, this affects the basic principles of family policy and leads to some further questions: what role do the new media play? how can new social networks and supportive systems facilitate the coping process? what kind of support do families need in order to ensure that the family developmental process progresses without any problems?

We can only partly answer these questions: it is true that the research on intervention has started since the early eighties to focus increasingly on transition; yet these interventions were underpinned by a theoretical basis not before the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties such as "The Becoming A Family Project" at the University of California, Berkeley (Cowan & Cowan 1992). There is also a project initiated by the German Ministry for Family, Senior citizens, Women and Youth in which I am involved as a supervisor of the research work. Another study which should be mentioned in this context is the study of Levant (1988) focussing on fathers.

All of these projects are trying to help family members to acquire competences for coping with transitions. Such programs have proved to be efficient in a preventive way. One of the results of "The Becoming A Family Project" was that adequate coping with transition to parenthood is associated with higher marital stability. Other research groups were able to prove that the parents' psychological adaptation and the quality of marriage before the child's birth predict educational success during the first and the second year in the child's life.

Results like these make it clear that such an approach represents a unique chance of preventive work with families and at the same time provides the chance of predicting family development by help of predictors from early stages during family development. Thus behaviour during divorce can be predicted by means of the variables of preceding transitions. A similar method is used in connection with domestic violence.

The family-transition approach has already made its way into clinical and therapeutical research. The book "Families in Transition - Primary Preventive Programs That Work" (Bond & Wagner 1988) deals with topics of intervention both in normative and non-normative transitions. These coping strategies can also be applied in other transitions, e.g. after the death of a spouse; they aim at both adapting to the new situation of mourning and at assisting learning processes concerning further development and concepts for life. Also transitions in the education system like the transition from the family to day care or to school or from school to

working life are nowadays conceptualized by the transition-approach. In general, interventions based on this approach are developmentally and prospectively oriented.

III. Perspectives

I have already mentioned that contextual conditions, that is factors which can be influenced by political decisions, are of great importance as to whether an individual or a family system can or cannot cope with transition. By help of such concepts it is possible to record the significance of such factors and their effects much more precisely. This is a promising field of research in which further studies have to be made. As already mentioned, cultural factors also determine the coping process. It is one of the tasks of a family policy aimed at integrating cultural diversity to perceive these differences as a potential and as a source for innovation and stimulation.

In the previous years we have stressed in the Western countries the importance of preserving special values within the family like charity, solidarity, ethical responsibility and Christian beliefs. We promoted the preservation of old structures and roles without taking into consideration the transitions families are experiencing on a diachronical and on a global level. These transitions are causing families to change structurally and functionally in order to ensure their adaptation to changing life conditions from century to century.

I even dare to say that the preservation of values is directly linked to the competence of families to renew and develop their structures. Thus the wish for a harmonious and long-term partnership can only be fulfilled if people are free to design the structural conditions under which they want to experience such a partnership.

Finally, I should like to draw your attention to another aspect which has gained importance during the last few years: while dealing with families we have without much consideration tended towards a conservative, problem-centered and deficit-oriented approach. This applies to research, practice and politics. The concept of vulnerability refers to the predisposition of an indiviual to develop various forms of psychopathological and dysfunctional behaviour. It reflects on a tendency to negative developmental results, which can occur under conditions of risk.

In contrast, the concept of resilience represents a model which concentrates on positive forces. Instead of concentrating on factors of risk and the recording of their negative effects on development, attention is centered on the resilience of individuals and families. We will receive valuable advice for preventive help from families who succeeded in coping with transitions. A number of studies recommend a shift in focus. This would mean concentrating on the healthy and adaptive reactions instead of focussing on risk factors and the etiology of behaviour problems. We need more information on the resilience of children, young people, mothers and fathers and we need to know more about how resilience develops and changes in the life course. For this we require studies which inform us about resilience, especially in respect to different populations and different cultural groups. These studies should consider that families might profit from an intercultural point of view. Moreover, we need programs for families which strengthen their resilience by moderating risk factors, by strengthening the protective factors and by teaching all family members coping strategies for handling stressful and difficult situations.

Family research has stressed the importance of contextual factors, and the insights gained during the International Year of the Family underline the responsibility politicians, economists, the media and the entire society have for our families. The positive development of families is directly linked to the answers we can give them when they have to face important transitions in

their lives. We need social responsibility for families which corresponds to a changed philosophy for families: a philosophy which affirms cultural diversity and which views families as a changing and developing system.

The chances for survival of this system are directly connected with its competence to cope with normative and non-normative transitions. They are also connected with the social framework offered to families by society. Only an understanding of the family which conceives it as a dynamic unit and which accepts structural variety, can contribute to the preservation of what we all desire: the family as the smallest unit of our society and as a source of personal happiness.

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(This text is a slightly abridged version of Prof. Fthenakis' key-note address to our 5th Seminar. Those who might wish to have the full text with the complete list of references are invited to apply to the NGO Committee on the Family, Executive Secretariat.)

DISCUSSION

John Bennett (UNESCO): *Indeed we do need as much knowledge on the family as possible. Main points may be: The importance of cultural variations; families as developing systems; and resilience, taking the positive view. There are many valuable publications on resilience done by the International Catholic Child Bureau. Besides, the Australian Institute of Family Studies has listed 332 projects from 47 countries, to be found in the International Directory of IYF Research Activities.*

Gertraud Pichler (IFHE): *Is there a difference in the kind of preparation for parenting for young men and women? Are there differences in attitudes towards families or to divorce?*

Prof. Fthenakis: *There are such questions asked in the studies I mentioned and there are some findings in the literature, e.g. Cowan & Cowan, who evaluate eight years after the birth of the first child.*

Sigrid Hopf (ICP): *You mentioned that young mothers often experience changes in their friendship networks. To what extent do friendship networks help families cope with their very special tasks?*

Prof. Fthenakis: *We have little research of that kind for the transition to parenthood, but we have very good studies on the role of this network for the transition to post-divorce families. If you have mothers with a well functioning network of that kind, you will see that they cope with the adaptation after divorce much better than without it. We just finished a study on relationships after divorce and found that the most important intervention is the contact to friends and not the intervention of institutions. About 30% of mothers use this kind of contacts during and after divorce.*

Henk Degen (Int.l Federation of Marriage Preparations Cent,) *I work with the Dutch Bishops' Conference, Commision for the Family. What do you think of the European Mediation Steering Committee, which is dealing with mediation in conflicts in the family. The mediation lawyer, in divorce cases can do very good things in dealing with couples, especially in the questions of co-education after divorce.*

Prof. Fthenakis: *This is quite a problem. Mediation is a philosophy. It is one of the interventions and very useful before, during and after divorce. But we have no longitudinal studies on how efficient it is. But its inherent philosophy of possible cooperation, of ongoing responsibility, even among conflicts, is a main part for the healthy development of the child. What I miss in it is, that it is only problem-oriented and focusses mainly on the conflicts existing between the parents. We just now try to establish this kind of intervention as one of a preventive kind during the transition to parenthood, as we have to rethink about intervention to focus more on the preventive side. We try to keep the coping capabilities of the young parents to solve their problems before they become larger and larger. We try to change the philosophy of mediation in a preventive way.*

Joanna Foster: *In the public's mind there is a confusion between counselling and mediation. In one of my other roles, president of our country wide marriage counselling, I relate to a piece of recent research about the very beneficial effects of there being intervention early enough to stop people even taking divorce proceedings in consideration when the relationship has broken down. But we need much more research in this area.*

Jan Gerris (University of Nijmegen, Institute of Family Studies): *In the Netherlands we have an elaborate system of social welfare, but what is still missing is a family policy and also a family ministry. In my institute we are doing a lot of family research and we also do much counselling for families. Two points strike me as particularly important: empowerment for*

parenting is the one; the other one is providing better resources that help parents to come over difficult times in their interactions with children, which eventually include dealing with behaviour problems and/or even delinquency.

Another comment to the analysis of family transitions and to the interface between researchers and policy makers: sometimes much sound research is offered to policy makers, and still they refuse to take it as an information. They rather interpret it as the opposite, they take studies doing research on transitions in the family as coming from a science of weaknesses of families, as a science of instability, a science of bad will of the parents themselves. Thus, research can also be misused as a legitimation for not helping and not making interventions. Let us put the interplay between research and policy making once more on our agenda! The use of information and research on the way of family functioning is not free from being used as information about not having to take care of families.

Prof. Fthenakis: *The topic would be the kind of cooperation betwen politicians and social scientists. We have a discussion on that since the eighties. As the director of a state institute, I have quite different experiences. If you try to introduce a new perspective you have the possibility to look at the application, to control it and to find new ways of cooperation.For example, in a new project of ours, we try to integrate the media into the project; we try to find ways how we transform our ideas into the field and to see how competent the transformation process is; how we have to cooperate with other institutions, and also with policy makers in a way we can agree to. There is an interesting publication on that question: Mark & Shotland, Social Science and Social Policy.*

Sigrid Hopf (ICP): *I am most impressed by the projects with families that were presented and that were and are undertaken all over the world in connection with the IYF, and by the efficiency that can be reached with human potential, backed by good professional input. The question would be how to transform such good experiences into the big systems of our societies in interaction with governmental structures.*

Canon Dunstan Bukenya (Marriage Encounter, Uganda): *I am most impressed and fascinated by the issue that has been called family development. The idea struck me that we have to develop new families. People must study ways how to give more life to families, what live families mean. In Africa this question is very serious. We do not know what to do. Of course we love. But we do not know how to handle it for families. Besides, there is the question: how should we make governments and NGOs intervene? For these reasons I feel that seminars like the present one are so important.*

REVIEW OF EXPERIENCES AND IYF CHALLENGES: FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

PRESENTATION OF A "FRAME FOR FUTURE ACTION"

Dennis Callagy

As many speakers are referring to, this is a time of transition. The Vienna NGO Committee wants to continue to be the voice for families, to push the governments and the public opinion to keep the family as a main issue, and in a pragmatic way.

For this purpose we have developed a plan "Action 1996 through 1997" which covers five areas of activities:

- service to the international network,
- close cooperation with the Family Unit of the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development,
- building a Global Platform,
- support for lobbying, nationally and internationally,
- a number of working groups.

One part of the Plan is a Draft Frame for Future Action, entitled "NGOs Beyond IYF - From Awareness to Implementation" (see Annex). It is meant to be a flexible, supportive tool for NGOs for developing concepts of effective family focussed activities at all levels after IYF.

The frame suggests to develop Action Sheets for chosen substantive issues and to structure them according to the sections

- Objectives
- Strategies
- Implementation and evaluation.

As an example the Action Sheet "Mainstreaming Family Concerns into Social Policies and Programmes in National and International Contexts" is available to you. Maybe you can already in the deliberations and the reports of your Working Groups follow this procedure, when considering your priorities and connected actions.

If you find this useful, we invite you to develop your own action sheets aiming at the international, national, local and personal level, and to share them with us at the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, for compilation throughout the network and to our various partners, to governments as well as the UN. We welcome your consideration of our plan, your input and your suggestions for continued collaboration and for keeping the family agenda, family mainstreaming and the family spirit alive.

WORKING GROUPS

WORKING GROUP (1)

"ACTIVATING THE INNER RESOURCES OF FAMILIES"

Introduction: Stefan Vanistendael, International Catholic Child Bureau

In the work of our organization we are mainly interested in why persons or a system, like the family, who live in difficult conditions, manage to live well in a socially acceptable way. We ask ourselves: why and how do they lead a constructive life? This capacity to build up a positive life in spite of adverse conditions is called resilience, a word which is hard to translate into other languages. One example would be Anne Frank, who in her short and endangered life did far more than resist destruction.

This resilience approach recognizes the existence of problems, but it tackles them in a constructive way. By no means we think that the activation of the inner resources of the family is a substitute for economic or social policy. At best such an activation can be complementary to social and economic policies, and an inspiration for setting certain accents therein. Examples could be: cooperation between professionals and volunteers, as we shall hear in the next contribution from Home Start in the U.K.; or, the stimulation of personal responsibility and activation of local resources by social policy, without excluding people and without creating service dependency.

We are not presenting and discussing scientific research results. Our work starts when research ends. What we do is based on a different kind of thinking than that of research. But we do use research findings in the identification of areas in which families and local groups can look for an activation of resources of families and family members. Such suggestions are inspired both by science and by ordinary experience, particularly in the field of child resilience.

There are many areas in which we can try to activate family resources. I shall present a few, but these are by no means exclusive. Everybody should try to see in his or her own local context if and how this approach operates and in which areas.

1. Families can set free much energy in their members by creating a climate of *confidence, mutual trust and acceptance* between family members. This starts at a very early age by bonding processes, but it continues through later life. This will require, among other things, realistic expectations towards each other, good communication, taking time to listen to each other, accepting that not everything and not everybody is perfect; however, some standards have to be firmly set.

It seems that people need this sort of fundamental mutual acceptance of each other as persons - though not necessarily acceptance of their behaviour - as a basis for building up other things, such as learning of skills. The family may be the best suited social institution which, at least in principle, can offer that type of relationship. This goes against certain trends, which operate very much on conditional and functional relationships of the type "I accept you as long as you perform well, as long as you fulfill certain criteria".

2. Help from outside, preferably from *informal social networks*, such as friends or neighbours including school teachers can help set free resources within the family. This opens up a very promising orientation: linking professionals with voluntary help. This may imply that the first role of professionals in social work is not to intervene directly but rather to see how existing informal networks can be activated. This may lead to a revalorisation of certain practices and

ways of life in so called developing countries, as something to build on and to develop rather than to destroy, as sometimes happens in the course of an ill conceived "development".

3. Many resources can be set free when people see some *sense, meaning and purpose* in their lives. In many cases family life in itself is an end that gives such meaning. But families can also be good places for value education which is related to such meaning. To give one example: it is important that the difference between the price and the value of goods and services is realized, and that both are appreciated. The price of bread and vegetables may be relatively low, but what does that say about their value? If we try to grow vegetables or bake bread we may already get a better sense of their value. This is also an area where philosophy and non fundamentalist religion can be important.

4. A true sense of humour can set free a lot of energy. Humour is unintentional; it is more than just fun: often it is the smile in the face of adversity. Humour is a gift, we cannot teach it, but families can create a climate which allows the growth of humour, by relaxing undertakings, by games, by singing together ...

Actually, we use for our presentations the model of a little house (called *casita* in Spanish), when we start to discuss the situation as it really is, and for finding out what we want to achieve. We can use it for individuals or for families and also for groups. Usually the participants find out during the discussion that they can decide to change the rooms, or add some rooms, to make e.g. better use of the attic etc. They find out that this house is by no means one which cannot be changed: each room represents an area for possible intervention. The actual words and deeds are like the furniture everyone has to place in the rooms. However, such decisions have to be done under local and, often, unique conditions.

There is a lot more to say about resilience. You can consult the rich research literature, or the ICCB publication: Growth in the Muddle of Life, or the publication by Edith Grotberg: A Guide to Promoting Resilience in Children, The Hague, Van Leer Foundation, 1995.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 1

By Stefan Vanistendael, ICCB

The workshop united about 20 people from a variety of backgrounds and continents.

It identified seven important recommendations, as well as a series of people and groups who can play an important role in the implementation of those recommendations. The specifics of how each recommendation can be carried out are difficult to plan at an international level, because such specifics have to be very carefully adapted to each context, each situation and each culture.

A general concern in the activation of inner resources is the promotion of greater family harmony. This can take many different forms and shapes and includes a variety of ways of dealing with conflict.

Issues - Recommendations

1. It is important to recognize, enhance and nurture the *informal networks* surrounding families, such as friends or communities. Such networks are key agents for sorting out many problems and for the construction of happy family lives.

2. In all sectors of society we must give more *positive messages* to families. While realizing that families may have problems, we must also recognize that solutions normally are built on

positive elements and strengths. Cynicism which does not recognize such positive elements never has helped anybody.

3. It is important to speak words of *affirmation that are rooted in reality,* to families and to persons, because this contributes to building character and strengths.

4. *Family practice and family research must learn from each other.* All concerned people and groups must document and share "best practice", i.e. the things that work within a given context, so as to move from a problem focussed to a solution focussed approach, concentrating on strengths rather than on deficits. This sharing must be done locally, regionally, nationally, across borders and between continents. It can be helpful to focus attention to different aspects of family life according to the following litte frame of four points: a) the person within the family, b) the dyadic relationships within the family, c) the family as a system, d) the physical and social environment of the family.

5. Groups reaching out to families should be *more transparent* about their values, for example by clear mission statements, so as to clarify choices for families in need.

6. Many families, not the least in so called developing countries, suffer under difficult exterior circumstances (lack of income, poor housing, poor health care etc.). In *some* cases such *external pressure* can liberate some *inner resources*, for example when families unite to work together for the improvement of their living conditions in common agricultural, economic or housing projects. State regulations should, by using external objectives, facilitate rather than hamper such positive processes.

7. It would be useful to organize an *international conference* on the theme of "Activating the inner resources of the family".

Implementation

The last point (7) should probably be implemented by an international body such as the NGO Committee on the Family.

Many people are concerned when we want to build communities which really care for families. This could include volunteers, non professionals and professionals from all walks of life. They can all work with families in partnership. For examples: teachers, social workers, researchers, medical doctors, youth workers, sports coaches, church workers, architects, planners politicians, the legal system etc.

The education system should give particular attention to families, in a variety of ways: by training professionals, by organizing feedback about family realities from practitioners to trainers, by incorporating a curriculum on family life and family relations into general education.

WORKING GROUP (2)

FAMILIES IN THEIR IMMEDIATE AND WIDER SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction: Margaret Harrison, Home Start U.K.

Earlier today, we talked about the need for practical action and grass roots movements. I therefore have particular pleasure in sharing with you the work of Home-Start - a very practical organization - which works with families in their community, but starts at first by supporting them in their homes.

The idea for setting up such an organization came originally from the families themseles. I had worked in a family centre, a child guidance clinic and with children who had already been removed into Care. Many of the families would ask me, as another parent, to come and visit them at home to talk things through and to give them a hand in a practical way. Clearly young families need someone with the time to listen, time to support them where their problems exist, time to help in a practical way and time to have some fun together.

Home-Start is a voluntary organization in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown. In the family there must be at least one child under school age. Families are offered support by volunteers who are themselves parents.

Each Home-Start scheme is an independent voluntary organization rooted in its own community; it works towards increased confidence and independence of the family by:

meeting families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected;

reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual, and emphasizing the pleasures of family life;

developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and understanding can be developed; the approach is flexible to take account of different needs;

encouraging the parents' strengths and emotional well-being for the ultimate benefit of their own children;

encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available within the community.

The ethic of voluntary work is very important to Home-Start as it means that volunteers choose to work within the organization and with families for as long as they are needed, but most importantly as the families themselves can choose whether or not they wish to have a Home-Start volunteer. Most do, because they value the opportunity of having another parent supporting them regularly in their homes.

Partnership with parents and partnership with professionals has been practised in Home-Start since 1973 when the first scheme began in Leicester, England. Such partnership is at the core of the recent Children Act in our country. Families are referred to Home-Start by social and health workers, teachers, churches and other voluntary organizations. Increasingly they refer themselves. We are able to provide a service which is not within the remit of other organizations.

Let me give you a few examples of families who have benefitted from Home-Start:

Jenny had three children, each with a different father. She had suffered from violence and was very nervous. Her children had no stimulation and Jenny felt overwhelmed and exhausted.

After only six weeks of visiting by a Home-Start volunteer, Jenny told me that she and Vivien were more like sisters. She could tell her anything and she was kind and helpful. Vivien supported Jenny for several years, and is still in touch with the family as a friend.

Janet had five children under seven years old. Her husband was in prison. Janet was not supported by her neighbours or her own family and she was jealous that her husband in prison had no financial problems, no children to cope with 24 hours a day and had three cooked meals every day. A Home-Start volunteer began to support Janet and her children on four mornings every week. The husband was eventually discharged from prison, and support to the whole family continued for three years, during all the normal ups and downs of family life. It is a long story, but eventually Janet chose to become a Home-Start volunteer herself. This is a very important feature of Home-Start that very often the people we help, choose in turn to become Home-Start volunteers themselves and to pass the idea on.

Sue was a doctor's wife. She had a three year old and a new baby. Her day lasted from 5 o'clock in the morning until midnight. She enjoyed regular visits by a Home-Start volunteer every Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Sometimes she valued the opportunity of going back to bed and having a sleep, sometimes she chose to go out without the children, but usually she valued the opportunity of talking to another woman about things other than family life. Sue only needed Home-Start support for a few months, by which time the baby was sleeping through the night and she felt better able to cope.

There are so many families that I would like to tell you about but it is important to know that Home-Start is for *any* type of family.

Volunteers and professionals are performing quite different tasks. Volunteers can respond to people as individuals, whereas of course professionals have to respond to the problems. Volunteers can be with families for as long as necessary, whilst most professionals have limited time and often have to do things to or for the family.

There are five things which Home-Start volunteers can offer, which it is usually not possible for professionals to provide: time (at the average four hours each week); flexibility and a mutual relationhip. They do not represent authority, and they can become emotionally involved with the families they visit. This means that sometimes they become angry on behalf of the family, they can laugh or cry. Therefore it is important that volunteers have adequate support themselves from the Home-Start organization!

At the moment there are 180 schemes in the U.K. supporting well over 25.000 children and their parents each year. The cost of a Home-Start scheme is the same as keeping one child in Care for a year after a family has broken down. Home-Start is valued in the United Kingdom in relation to rural isolation, mental health, health of the nation, crime prevention and family support.

It has been a big surprise to me that Home-Start has now been developed in seven other countries: in Canada, Hungary (where they call their scheme Add Tovabb, which means "Pass-It-On" (they have realized that if you help one person to become more confident he or she in turn will pass it on by helping another family), Australia, Israel (where there are 19 schemes in Arab and Jewish communities), the Netherlands, Norway and Southern Ireland. We also work with British Forces families in Germany and Cyprus. There are now 13 other countries interested in adopting the Home-Start approach - from the Ukraine to Surinam.

From our work in other countries we now know that young families can all benefit from the support of other parents within their community. The Home-Start approach can be used irrespective of differences such as geography, religion, politics, education, income or culture.

Perhaps Home-Start works because it builds on ordinary human qualities which can have an extraordinary positive effect on parents and their children. These qualities for which one can neither legislate nor really train people include:

Affirmation of families who cope in the most distressing and difficult circumstances. We cooperate, we do not compete with other organizations; we also cooperate with each other in order to meet the needs of families.

We offer encouragement and enthusiasm, friendship, share generously ourselves, our skills, experience and time. We rather relie on genuine love, laughter, kindness, smiles, trust, truth, on valuing people and trying to be valuable; we all need to be needed, and that includes the families that we support. The Home-Start approach is very simple. A volunteer parent can help a young family experiencing difficulties for as long as is needed. Increasingly our services are being considered by policy makers, managers, educators, practitioners and researchers. After all, we cannot only ask for legislation for change, we have to live it, each of us.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP (2)

By Maria Kopp, Association of Large Families

Most people in our Working Group came from Eastern European countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Ukraine, Roumania, Armenia, some also from the USA and the UK. Having heard the idea of assessing the cost-effectiveness of families, we from countries in transition think that this would be a powerful argument with our governments.

The group decided to discern among 1. the wider social environment of families and 2. their immediate environment. Hence the report has two secions.

Issue 1: Families in their social environment

Objectives

1. Create a family friendly society.

2. Respect the similarities and differences of families from different cultures.

3. Highlight the importance of family concerns and issues, especially in countries in transition.

4. Deepen the awareness of the public about the crucial role of the family in building a responsible society.

5. Ensure that the economy structures recognize the needs and potentials of families, and that harmful influences on families are mitigated.

6. Prove the cost-effectiveness of strenghtening families by offering support through NGOs and a variety of preventive services.

Strategies

1. Strengthen the social skills of family members through flexible education methods.

2. Ensure that a wide variety of family friendly social resources exist in every community.

3. All legislation should reflect the views and needs of the families.

Implementation

1. Lobby for family friendly legislation.

2. Create flexible education and flexible working and community opportunities for parents.

3. Recognize and accept parenthood as a working activity.

4. Appoint identified persons at local, regional and national level to strengthen the infrastructure which can provide a family friendly society.

Evaluation

1. Examine the effect of current legislation on families.

2. Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of strengthening families.

Issue 2: Families in their immediate environment

Objectives

1. Help parents regain confidence within their families.

2. Help families to use local resources, including their neighbours, effectively.

3. Consider the needs of family members from different cultures.

4. Make use of human resources inherent in family relationships.

5. Analyze the effect of wide family systems in society.

Strategies

1. Analyze the most important psychological and sociological needs of families today.

2. Identify the key areas for action, e.g. purpose in life, self confidence, social skills, informal self-help groups.

3. Support new local initiatives.

Implementation

1. Inform families about opportunities for self-help.

2. Strengthen family friendly attitudes by influencing the national and local media.

3. Strengthen the acceptance of family values such as mutuality, cooperation, confidence and humour.

Evaluation

1. Measure the quality of life of the families involved.

2. Analyze the cost-effectiveness of any changes in the local community.

WORKING GROUP (3)

FAMILIES: PARTNERS IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

John Bennet, UNESCO

I congratulate your committee to keep questions of the family alive, as the UN are moving forward and, after the IYF, are occupied with the major concerns of the moment. It is good to remind them, that in all questions families are involved.

I have to convey the greeting of Mr. Mayor, the Director-General of UNESCO, who is very interested in what you are doing. Being primarily concerned with education and the transmission of culture, UNESCO is very well aware that families are the first educators. Children's development is deeply based on affection, which is much more important that it is given credit for.

It is very good to see representatives of ministries here, because for making policies, they have to be informed. However, at occasions like this, I would also be happy to see officials from education ministries, including those concerned with adult education. Also family ministries, when talking about education, mostly have primary schools in mind. However, we do need to involve families more in all phases of educational processes, because we need learning experiences for all! It will be necessary to make parents learn how to contribute in the life-long educational processes. Such kind of prevention with families would be much more effective than later on locking up criminal youngster. We must take the question of education in and by families much more serious that we do now.

Family education has the aim of raising the competence of family members, of improving the family environment to journey with skill and wisdom through the different life stages: infancy, early childhood, schooling, early relationships, committed partnerships, parenthood and grandparenthood; learning to live again as a couple, to become supportive grandparents, and to prepare for declining health and death. All these call for deep personal readjustments; ideally, major inputs are made at key moments throughout the life course, but the crucial stage of human development is childhood.

How does one get into the education system? The needs and opportunities of people in various parts of the world are very different. In a developing country like Bangla Desh - a country of the size of the U.K. with as many children under five as there are in the whole European Union - the emphasis of family education is on maintaining nutritional and primary health, on protecting children against diseases, creating a healthy, safe environment, and on teaching them basic infrastructure skills including social participation.

In the industrialized world, where universal needs are met (often through services provided by the State), family well-being is defined in psychosocial terms. As I pointed out in my paper "Families and Education" there has been a decline in family and community responsibility for the education of children. Questions of family health, resource management and even child education are left in the hands of a providential State, which is expected to set stringent standards in these areas.

This decline began, to a significant extent, with industrialization. 19th century governments enacted compulsory schooling for children both to strengthen the nation state and to create a disciplined workforce. The school became a major socializing influence on the child. Not only was instruction in language and the sciences included in curricula but also a strong element of religious and/or nation-building ideology. Values of hard work, sobriety of life and respect for hierarchy were inculcated in schools throughout Europe. Families and communities relied on

public education to reinforce agreed values and conduct. They also perceived education as an entry point for their children into salaried employment.

Since the Second World War, however, education systems, while reinforcing the instructional and training aspects of education, have tended to abandon their socialization role. Practical considerations such as the pressure to include scientific and technical subjects in the curricula have led schools to concentrate on academic achievement; the movement away from dogmatism, the rise of the principle of laicity, and the growth of multiculturalism has created a vacuum: schools are reluctant - except in later classes when the study of literature and philosophy are proposed - either to orient children or to help them examine values and behaviour. Even dedicated teachers have been forced to follow a minimalist line, tempted to confine their role to one of formal instruction.

With the parallel influence of communities on education also having declined, the influence of the family on the child has weakened and its formative power been taken over by the media, consumer peer culture and public services. And still, increasingly, parents hand over their responsibility to socialize and educate the individual child to kindergarten and school!

This is not to say that all developed countries do neglect child socialization in families, or parents' participation in the educational processes in schools. Austria is an outstanding example of making strenuous efforts on establishing ongoing mechanisms of negotiation between school administrations, parent councils and student representatives.

We must bring parents into the field of formal education of their children. We have to ask ourselves seriously, how we can reconcile having a strong family life giving the children the necessary background, and at the same time strengthen socialization in schools; how we can benefit from the huge opportunities that such a strategy would offer to everybody.

We must not underestimate the difficulties. There is a great deal of parental ignorance and disempowerment. Many parents have been led to ignore completely the profound influence they have on their children. They do not realize how important it is for children to have affection, a healthy diet and a secure and regular home environment. They are unaware that their being "good-enough parents", able to cater for family needs, to exercize freely their legal rights and responsibilities will deeply affect the problem-solving abilities of their children. They are unconscious that the child's learning in school is enhanced by parental support and by the mega-skills learned in the home: self-confidence, perseverance, effort... Instead they relie uncritically on the school to "educate" their children.

Besides, there are many discontinuities between the culture at the home and in schools. These discontinuities are much more widespread today, particularly in our multi-cultural societies.

Our schools are often not prepared to taking children from different backgrounds to the dominant or "traditional" system, particularly in view of minority groups or from poor socio-economic conditions. We have to change our schools to take account of the needs of such children.

There is also the exclusionary nature of the public education system, the unwillingness of teachers to admit parents to take part in decisions concerning education. Teachers are still not framed to outreach to parents or to communities.

And there is the problem of incompatibility of parenting and working obligations of parents. On the one hand there are the many parents world-wide who are so poor or so busy trying to survive that they cannot give their children sufficient time or attention. On the other hand there is the devaluing of parental childcare, and the economic or emotional necessity of both parents working, with no or little safeguards to not leave the children unattended. Providing professional public-care services or encouraging local community or voluntary childcare,

sometimes by the extended family, do fill certain gaps, but do not fully relieve parents from being involved.

Examples of home-school partnerships are many, not only in the developing world, where they are customary, but also in the institutionalized education systems of the North. Many partnerships have already been established to examine e.g. school discipline; to involve parents in assessment; to advise about pornography and violence in the media; to provide remedial classes for disadvantaged children or for those with special needs; to form debating and play groups; to combat and prevent drug abuse, etc. Such partnerships are shown to have a very positive effect on adolescent and family attitudes to schooling, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

There are many problems, and we have to think very seriously as to how parents and the educational systems can work together in depth, and not just at a superficial level, in socializing children in order to lead them to happiness and wellbeing.

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REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 3

By Neda Forghani, Baha'i

We listened very carefully to Mr. Bennetts statement and were fully aware that partnerships of parents with all sorts of educational institutions need to be developed and strengthened, including even the world of business, of colleges and the systems of adult education. Also the need for life long learning will have to be included here.

In our working group we decided on concentrating on the question of partnerships between families and schools. The goals to be achieved by this cooperation should be happier children and happier teachers; civic responsibilities must be reached also by collaboration between various ethnic groups.

The OBJECTIVE must be the best development of the next generation in both the ethical dimension (in the formation of attitudes) and the "technical" one (aquisition of skills and cognitive powers). This development must be achieved through making the best use of the possibilities and special strengths of families and schools, and by their full cooperation.

As STRATEGIES we identified:

- Creating instruments for partnerships, channels motivating parents and teachers.
- Doing research on successful models, e.g. the Austrian school-forum, which was introduced as an element of democratization, involving a school-community council comprising three parents, three teachers, three students and the respective headmaster; they are to decide on a range of issues relevant to the particular school.

Examples of parent-school cooperation in Albania and Macedonia were introduced, there being the situation that governments do not quite understand the role of NGOs and classify them as "humanitarian organizations"; yet some cooperation with them has to be sought.

Necessary would be:

- Promoting a legal framework at the governmental level for such cooperation.
- Encouraging parents and teachers for partnerships by emphasizing their necessity and presenting good results.

IMPLEMENTATION can best be done by networking and disseminating success-stories
- to policy makers in governments, parliaments, political parties and NGOs;
- to parent associations;
- to the media by presenting campaigns for e.g. school ranking according to collaboration between parents and teachers;
- by creating and giving rewards, e.g. by UNESCO, the Ministry, NGOs;
- by distributing expert assessments of the unique role of families, the likewise unique role of schools and the synergetic effects of their cooperation.

WORKING GROUP (4)

THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND POLICIES ON FAMILY LIFE

Introduction: Francesco Belletti, International Center for Family Studies, Milan

The main point of my introduction is: most people talking about the relationship between families and the socio-economic dimension see "society" in the center; they believe, that if production goes well, everyone has to be satisfied. Families come afterwards.

Against this I hold that such an approach cannot help, because we are dealing with people, with individuals, with families inside societies. Today we have heard about the systemic approach regarding the family as an open system within an environment, and the necessity to understand the relationships between both. However, I would like to propose to start out with a slightly different aspect: regarding the different dimensions of problems families have to cope with in their relationship to society.

Family is not a purely "private affair"; quality of life within families is strongly determined by external conditions: social trends, economic development, poverty, social values, mass media messages and models affect family life styles, both positively and negatively. On the other side, quality of life in society depends on the strength and "quality" of family life and family values.

There is the idea that you have a general macro-economic system where things happen and individuals or families cannot do anything about it. However, the value of the goods and services produced within families and households is considerable. Non-market production by households can be conceptualized as "the goods and services produced for their own consumption by combining their unpaid labour and the goods and services they acquire at the market" (Chadeau).

The added value generated by these activities - and particularly by the dimension of family care - is excluded from conventional macro-economic calculations and aggregates. The system of national accounts therefore seems to think that the production of families and households is worth nothing.

Inside the family many economic strategies take place. Economists should recognize how people behave as economic actors throughout the family systems. An important point would be, how families put together their personal strategies. Here belongs the women's participation in the labour market, but also at which age young people (sometimes also children) start working and become customers of the market.

From a world wide perspective we have an unequal distribution of resources, which you are well aware of. The various crises have weakened every national system, both in the developed countries and in the developing ones, given the growing interdependence of the world economy; the economic geography of the world is rapidly changing! This conjunctural problem (with different timings and levels in different countries) added itself to a structural unequal distribution of resources and power, with ethnic and national conflicts, wars, urbanization etc. still aggravating the situations of many families. So we have to face a growing national unequal distribution of resources.

We have families who are unemployed, who have low incomes, who are headed by women, who are migrants and refugees, who have been displaced by wars, or those families suffering from discrimination.

Together with the economic crisis, we have been observing, in the last twenty years, a very deep crisis of the welfare system, caused by scarcity of resources, inefficiency,

bureaucratization of services, new emerging problems (AIDS, the growth of the aging population), and lack of consensus. There are also other specific aspects which have a direct influence on families and individuals, like the environmental degradation of housing situations. Education, health, housing, social protection, formerly provided in many countries by the public sector, are in danger of no longer being guaranteed, and when provided, often show big problems of efficiency and client-satisfaction.

There is also the question of equality within the family. We have a notion that the family should be the guarantee of some sort of equality and be an instrument for justice. There are several dimensions: intergenerational equity, which is one of the main tasks of families. But especially in Western societies we find big problems here: there is a tendency to give different weight to different generations. Through families it should be easier to recognize and guarantee intergenerational equity, taking into account the transmission of values, of life-style models, etc.

Another important point is gender equity. May I put forward one question: Is it really easier for women to enter the labour market than for men to take care of children? Who is going to work, who is to take care of the vulnerable and the dependents with problems?

On the one hand we have modernization bringing attitudes jeopardizing the stability of families, consumerism (a "MacDonaldization" of society), intrusion into family intimacy. On the other hand we also have the permanence of traditional models of family living, with some persons having too much power on others (e.g. men on women and children).

Families have to cope with external and economic problems, but also with their relational strategies. There is an urgent need to build up new relationships between sexes, and specifically in the couples; men and women have to discover a new complementarity. And families have a big responsibility in maintaining intergenerational relationships, both into the future - with the children - and into the past - with the older generations. Families will have to cope with it in a mix between formal and informal services.

Family policies are neither sectorial nor charitable. And we do need social policy. We cannot only relie on families' strengths, even if a very important strategy is the empowerment of families, also in the economic field. I do share the perspective of resilience of families, but it is also important to understand that we need general action by society. Generally, the economic and political actors think lowly of families, but in the aftermath of IYF we must continue to ask governments to consider families as socially relevant actors: after all, families can promote personal awareness of the social dimension of solidarity, which need not be limited to the internal family alone, and which makes the family as a whole a resource of solidarity for society.

Report Of Working Group 4

By Sr. Catherine Bernard, Service and Research Foundation on Family and Culture, India

There were some 20 participants in our group, who introduced themselves and their background. Some came from developing countries, some from countries in transition, some from developed countries. Whereas this brought much richness in sharing experiences, it also posed some difficulties in finding a common ground for the discussion. There were also different levels of involvement in working with families, as the group included researchers, lobbyists, and persons in direct contact with families.

We started out with an overview of Mr. Belletti's statement, then we proceeded to very open discussions in which all the participants took part.

The questions discussed were:
a) Identification, from the respective experiences, of the most important difficulties families encounter in the process of achieving socio-economic development;
b) What ways and means can and do families adopt, how do they cope positively with the external stress and the challenges of overcoming socio-economic problems and difficulties?

As the main ISSUE we agreed that there is increasing poverty in developing and also in developed countries. Some of the main dimensions of difficulties are of an economic and a socio-political nature.

As main OBJECTIVES we found the necessity of
- empowering families as such to become part and partners of the process of decreasing and minimizing poverty, of
- influencing policy-makers to formulate appropriate socio-economic policies, and of
- setting a preventive approach into motion, which would best support families.

We deliberated on STRATEGIES

at the grass roots level:
- direct support to families
- integral education, both formal and informal, with the aim to develop critical thinking, practical skills and fundamental values.

at national levels:
- lobbying for global family policies which include positive answers to questions of intergenerational relationships, gender equality and social equity.

at the international level:
- reducing mechanisms of global inequality;
- favouring international co-operation projects.

For IMPLEMENTATION we thought appropriate:
- mobilizing social actors (NGOs, governments) for concrete projects with families, e.g. amending laws in the direction of making them family sensitive;
- putting priority to appropriate housing projects;
- strengthening existing initiatives and/or establishing initiatives for and with families, e.g. family counselling, family services;
- encouraging and fostering family enterprises;
- organizing lobbying efforts for families, e.g. demonstrations.

For EVALUATION and assessment we could:
- use the model of the family policy grid of Alberta;
- collect and use statistical data;
- establish reporting mechanisms with a somewhat regular time frame.

WORKING GROUP (5)

MEDIA, FAMILIES: IMAGES AND IMPACTS

Introduction: David Isaacs, International Family Foundation

In my introduction to the working group theme I shall try to underline what I consider the most basic and critical subjects, and suggest fields in which action could be taken.

I also would like to bring home the idea of family enrichment, which I prefer to the notion of family development. Hereby I mean that by "family" we count on something which is permanent, but which has to be enriched, according to the particular circumstances. We have to do with a number of influences societies, at particular moments, exert on people.

An optimist is a person who, in any given situation, can detect what is positive, what he can take advantage of; of course he would also have to see all the problems as well, otherwise he would be in a world of make-believe. But an optimist will train himself in finding out the positive and in taking advantage of it. He will develop a sense of humour, as a habit. In relationship to the media we should do likewise: see what is good about it and take advantage of it.

Obviously the media do affect members of the family, but it is seldom - if ever - correct to relate specific behaviour directly to, and only to the influence of the media. For example, children do not show violent behaviour *only* because they have seen violent behaviour on television, although television may be an important factor.

We must also take into consideration that the way media may influence the family is different to the way they work elsewhere. We need to know what the media are really, what kind of presence they have in the home, how much time is dedicated to them and in what circumstances. Another question to ask is about the way the media come to influence people. How do images work? How does the written word come into play? How does sound affect people? All these things need to be taken into account if we want to be reasonably objective about the question.

What we can do here is making recommendations about what is needed from the experts. I suggest that we spend some time thinking about the situation of the family itself, then some more trying to establish clearly how underlying values can be dealt with. Finally it would be useful to determine what strategies are needed in order to harness the media and their effects adequately.

The media in the home

All thinking people will have their standpoint as to what values whould be looked after in a special way. They will behave in different ways according to the view they have about life, about marriage, about how the family should be understood. Also, people's views tend to change according to what their own personal situation is. We can recognize that the mere living together of people in an intimate and spontaneous way - as people do in family life - tends to produce an uncritical attitude towards outside influences. The media are present in the home almost as another member of the family. Little organized attention is given to them, and the content and time dedicated to them are rarely related to family values.

In fact, families need to be helped to think through the values they wish to live and to develop a critical attitude towards the media; to take advantage of what good they may offer, and to avoid undue influences when advisable. It may be difficult for family members to do this without outside help as media influences are often subtle and hard to recognize.

Another fact about television has to be mentioned that is sometimes not sufficiently understood. Often personal satisfaction is achieved through making an effort to obtain good results. However, magnificent results can be obtained from TV (e.g. watching some sporting event on the other side of the globe at the very time it is happening) with almost no effort at all: the only effort is to press a button. Thus the basic equation between effort and results is broken, and this, in itself, can disrupt the development of human qualities and habits.

Knowledge about the influence of the media

We mentioned developing the capacity of critical attitudes for making reasonable use of the media in the home; we also mentioned that help would be needed as often as the influences are subtle. For example, values are always behind the advertisements on TV or in the press; most often the message is: "Buy me and you will see what a wonderful time you are going to have!" and the like. The same happens in virtually all media content, values are always present.

It would be especially important to know what models of family are shown most frequently. If something is communicated with some permanence, it becomes "normal". In the same way it would be useful to know what behaviours are shown most frequently. Researchers could study the media in their countries in order to discover what the paramount values are, which information is given in "family" shows, etc.

I doubt that many people would try to "protect" the family from different influences and, even if family members knew what those influences are, that many of them will act accordingly. All the same it is the only way that will allow family members to act responsibly; responsibility is not only a question of assuming the results of one's own actions but also a question of foreseeing the possible consequences of these actions. And this cannot be done without adequate information.

The media and the unity of the family and society

Some will say that, as we are living in a pluralistic society, almost all values can and should be shown by the media. But any kind of unity, and therefore of community and communication between people require shared values of some kind.

For example, if I meet a person for the first time I could start talking to him about things I appreciate and therefore are of value to me (e.g. education, theatre or gardening). But if this person does not appreciate those things, I cannot communicate with him. All I can do is to talk *at* him. If I then bring out another subject, e.g. sport, and that *does* interest him, - if we have a shared value - we can start communicating. If we want to encourage communication among people, it would be useful that the media uphold, portray and show specific worthwhile values, like responsibility, justice, tolerance or service to others; basically destructive values should be shown with reticence and under careful control, like violence, indifference to others, hatred, discrimination, pornography. It should be possible to influence the media directly on these questions, including by making use of existing legislation or by creating such legislation at the various national and international levels. Careful attention should also be given to overt or subliminal manipulation.

There is a final value, and that is the idea of happiness. There is no option about wanting to be happy. Apart from much that has been said about it, happiness is the result of reflecting, or contemplating something which is intrinsically good. The curious thing is that when you start to discover what is good, you discover more and more what is evil; the person suffers when he contemplates something which is bad.

All over the world there is the urgent wish: we must not suffer. I say: if you want to be happy you have got to come to grips with suffering.

As to families and the media: How can we help parents developing sensible critical thinking in their families? My answer would be: worry about which values the children get, and once they have gotten them straight, trust them to be able to take advantage of everything they can, and at the same time to face up to the difficulties which the media are also presenting. This would be taking the optimistic way.

For the working group I propose to discuss actions to be taken in three basic fields:

1. Research as to what is happening in the media, and in relation to what their real influence is.

2. Educational activities that help family members use the media efficiently according to their family values, and through school support.

3. Influencing the media through direct procedures, or through supportive organizations and legislation.

Report of Working Group 5

by Peter Crowley, International Council of Alcohol and Addictions

32 participants from a multi-cultured background, prodominantly women and in the main tending toward middle age, took part not as media experts but as concerned and interested parents, trying to cope with the media in their daily lives. Some had grown up without television or the multi media, and it took some time to loosen the attention of the working group from a "tunnel vision view" of the media consisting solely of television, to include the influence and effects of the "internet".

The OBJECTIVE and question before us was not "to be or not to be", to quote a past master of the media of his day, William Shakespeare, but "how to". This is to say that the media are here to stay, and television, as was mentioned by David Isaacs in his introductory statement, is sometimes regarded as another member of the family. It was recommended above all else to avoid a purely negative approach, such as "media bashing" or regarding the media purely as polluters. Many have to overcome inherent fears of regarding all media as a threat as well as a desire to control all input into the family.

The enrichment factor of the interchange and interaction of communities and cultures was stressed as well as the opportunity they offer to increase our knowledge, awareness and horizons.

A pessimistic approach sees parents solely as objects of the media, and the working group set out to see where parents can change things around and become subjects and influencers, while at the same time recognizing their limits, at which juncture it is necessary to seek the aid of the media experts and researchers, as guide lines in our responsibilities as parents.

Strategies for dealing with the media within the family

Since our influence on media producers is limited it seemed appropriate to emphasize the aspects *within* the family.

- One of the main programme points was the influence of the role model of the parents themselves as passive media consumers.

- Coherence and congruity should be evident between the parents' criticism of certain role models in the media and their own subsequent behaviour; it should be avoided to turn television characters into lightning rods of the parents' own anger and frustrations.

- The need to inform ourselves as to what is available, also in the written media was stressed: a need of information about information does exist.

Other issues treated were:

- Reflection on values conveyed by the role model images we absorb and the life styles put across, not just on television but just as much in children's books, cartoons and programmes.

- The need to unite the family around this reflection as a counteraction to the suppression of dialogue within the family which overdoses of television can cause.

- To educate family members to attain a mature approach to the media as enrichment and not as slavery.

- To realize that there is such a phenomenon as "selective inattention", which means that we do not absorb all we see, hear or read, and certainly do not believe all we hear or read. Again the question would be, how to absorb or not to absorb?

- Encouraging the creativity of very young children as early as possible as a means of prevention of "stimuli flooding", so that they are more interested in their own abilities than in the consumption of images mostly developed by adults.

- Confronting the question as to whether or not television especially, leads to the disappearance of childhood with children being exposed to an adult world with which they cannot relate.

Strategies for dealing with the media outside the family

- We tend to neglect and underestimate our influence which a well chosen concerted feed-back to the media could achieve, expecially if it is not only destructive but above all constructive. Such an input could be made by groups of parents getting together and formulating their own response in the areas of concern.

- We need to overcome an inherent shyness in dealing with the media; an attempt to cultivate working relationships with individual journalists could be encouraged. It would seem appropriate to personify the media in order to make them more tangible and approachable.

- The importance of parental representativity is essential in the media landscape, otherwise we leave a vacuum with regard to parental responsibility and constructive programme planning.

- Several examples of a positive dialogue with media representatives were discussed, helping to avoid regarding the media as some nebulous monster, benevolent or not, which is totally out of our control. In fact many television programmes welcome an input from parents with regard to their attractiveness and acceptability.

- In the above mentioned dialogue it may be necessary to scrutinize our choice of language as to whether we consistently use negative terms such as e.g. "problems", "chaos" or "disaster" instead of more positive wording such as e.g. "questions", "issues" or "areas of concern".

- Involve schools and the education system by forming round tables of parents and teachers to encourage schools to deal with the media, by including both computer skills and a mature and critical approach when treating the benefits and negative spill-out of the internet in their curricula.

As to implementation and /or evaluation

- Further research is needed to assess the influence of media images on the development of children, especially with regard to the transfer of the role models portrayed.

- The effects of media stimuli, noise and speed (the latter two being called the modern vices of civilization) pose many questions for researchers, which demand immediate attention to avoid possible damage to developing children.

- The transfer and availability of research results and media expert recommendations also needs to be addressed by experts themselves, parents, government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

PART III:

NEW PERSPECTIVES AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY - MAINSTREAMING FAMILY CONCERNS INTO SOCIAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

Dennis Callagy

We have been contemplating family issues from the micro- to the macro-level, looking at formal and informal support systems like social and economic impacts, the education systems, questions of resilience in families and how to deal with the influence exerted by the media.

In this section we want to make one step further and try to pave an operational way by discussing strategies for the future. "Mainstreaming families" would mean making the subject of families an obvious and routine subject to be debated, institutionalizing structures for carrying out specialized work for families, establishing processes which take families into account in any policy question.

We need to continuously raise awareness in the general public, within organizations and with policy makers of the problems as well as the potentials of families, at a level at least equal to e.g. Environment or Gender Issues, as integral part and input in the follow-up of UN Conferences. Specifically NGOs should keep family as a permanent element of their own programmes, and lobby for a permanent family perspective and family impact consideration in all social policy decisions. Mainstreaming may mean: keeping family in the agenda, if it is not, asking why not, and if it is, seeing that it is not just an addendum and why not a top priority.

The Vienna NGO Committee wishes to see that family is integrated and incorporated into all social concerns. We have acted accordingly during the Social Summit in Copenhagen and during the 4th Women's Conference in Beijing, seeing to it that the subject of families is included into those documents where before it has been sorely missing. NGOs, when taking influence on government actors could achieve, that this subject is made more transparent, operational and self-evident.

In the following, we have some examples how the issues of families can be dealt with in order to bring them into decision making processes.

MAINSTRAMING FAMILY CONCERNS INTO NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Marion Thielenhaus, Head of Division at the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

How can the achievements of the International Year of the Family be safeguarded in a sustained manner, how can the commitment of so many groups that was reflected in numerous initiatives and activities during the Year be used in the long term for the benefit of families and their concerns?

How can the issues and concerns of families achieve greater priority in both politics and policy-making? I could make the answer an easy job by suggesting that you do what we have done in

Germany, Austria and other European countries, which is providing for independent family policy structures, so as to make it obvious that family policy is a political field in its own right and not a mere branch of social policy. However, that would be an oversimplistic thing to do.

The establishment of a family policy infrastructure is indeed an essential prerequisite for the formulation and implementation of aims and programmes in family policy. For any policy benefitting families to be successful, however, it must be complemented by quite a number of important framework conditions and specific factors.

Germany, where I come from, has an excellent family policy infrastructure. Since 1953, Germany has had a ministry for Family Affairs on the Federal level; in some of its Federal States, too, family policy has been firmly incorporated into the institutional structure. Even the municipal entities in our country are gradually coming to discover family policy as a task and to take the corresponding measures. With respect to the IYF this was especially useful.

In Germany, many tasks of family policy - and this is most of all true for family services - are not performed by government agencies, but by voluntary organizations such as the churches and welfare organizations. Addition, the entities representing the families' interests, like family organizations and associations, offer a wide range of services and activities for families. Their work is supported by the government, they are heard in the context of relevant legislative projects and are thus involved in decision-making processes concerning family policy. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs receives counselling from a scientific advisory committee on family matters. Last but not least, the Federal Government regularly submits a family report elaborated by an independent commission of experts. The most recent one, the fifth family report was presented during the International Year of the Family. Its title is "Family and Family Policy in Unified Germany - the Future of Our Human Resources".

In spite of this well developed infrastructure of family policy, it is not always easy to put a given idea in this field into practice. Family policy has to assert itself against other interests in the interplay of forces between the different political groups and their respective areas of policy. The adoption of family policy measures requires a majority that can only be attained if society realizes the need to ameliorate the living conditions of families by means of political action.

Our approach cannot be successful without constant promotion and efforts. It is our idea and starting point, that family policy is a cross-sectional policy area. On the one hand our task is to elaborate family legislation, e.g. concerning parental leave and family allowances; on the other hand to influence other ministries to have a look at their legislation and their impact on families. This means, if there is one minister who does not agree, we have to negotiate again. So we have a chance to enter into discussion with other ministries in favour of families, when legislation is concerned. Additionally, there is also the field of public relations. We also work with researchers and elaborate studies in order to get as many data on families as possible, which we use for legislative matters.

According to the decision of the Ministers of the European Union, it is also my task as one of the senior officials of a family ministry to go into a sort of dialogue with the European Commission on family matters We are informed of what the Commission is doing in that field, we discuss national approaches to family policies, we inform ourselves about the developments in the different member states. Unfortunately, at the moment we cannot do more than that. We regret that we could not enter all the ideas we had in our country into common processes, and hope that we shall have a more theme-oriented debate in the future, and not just information as we have it now.

The fact that families as the basic units of society have a perfect right to be given consideration and support must be made evident again and again. Policy-makers alone cannot accomplish

that task. It is only by the cooperation of all forces, of the political and social groups, and not least by the commitment of the families themselves that the ground may be prepared for a family support scheme that enables people to translate into reality their ideas of life in the family.

In Germany, the International Year of the Family saw numerous positive initiatives of cooperation between the various responsible agencies and different social groups interested in the field of family policy. Ensuring this cooperation in the long-term must be among the aims of the follow-up programmes of the IYF. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the cooperation of all those social forces whose work is of importance to families, specifically the family organizations and associations, the political parties and churches, the employers' and employees' organizations, must be guaranteed by establishing a standing family conference. The underlying idea is to provide a forum for dialogue between policy-makers and practitioners for the benefit of the families. The starting signal for this family conference will be given in Bonn in the near future by the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Mrs. Claudia Nolte.

Family policy concentrated for a long time on providing economic benefits for families. The insight that the mere provision of material benefits alone, important as they are, cannot bring about a family-friendly atmosphere in a country, has only been gaining ground in the past few years. What families need is support, relief and assistance in their immediate day-to-day life. Children need room to play, parents need working hours that are compatible with their family responsibilities.

I think that, not only in Germany, but also in other countries, an ever greater priority will have to be awarded to the following two questions: how can living environments be created for families? How can the framework conditions for the reconciliation between family life and gainful employment be achieved? People do want to have families, they want to live in their families, they certainly want to live with children. In the light of this, we have to do all in our power to make it possible for them to lead their lives in their families, to live with their children. After all, it is not only the families themselves that will benefit therefrom, but the whole of society.

COLLABORATING REGIONALLY: NGOS AND GOVERNMENTS - TOGETHER FOR FAMILIES

William Lay, Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Community (COFACE)

The theme of my presentation is how NGOs and Governments can collaborate regionally. As I have to do with the European Union I have to refer to its perspective. The EU is unique in its kind: it is not an intergovernmental body, nor a United States of Europe, rather something between the two, and with original institutions, relationships, and procedures linking the States together. It is not a region like other regions.

Family policy as such is not of the competence of the EU. However, this does not mean that over the years the various European institutions have not been doing a lot, even explicitly in the field of dealing with family issues. The definition given to a "European family policy" is the family dimension of the social, economic, cultural and educational policies of the countries of the European Union.

COFACE, the Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union, which deals with this kind of family policies, is an NGO, an umbrella organization, founded in 1958, at the

beginning of the EU which then comprised only six countries. Originally it was part of the International Union of Family Organizations, it grew and gradually became independent. We are non-political and non-denominational. At present we are a confederation with 75 national member organizations, many of which are also umbrella organizations in their countries gathering hundreds of smaller organizations.

These member organizations are very different in kind, you have the general family organizations as they are known in several countries. In other countries we also have women's organizations, consumer organizations, disabled people's organizations; the main element bringing these organizations together inside COFACE is their necessary priority focus on the family.

Our member organizations have their own beliefs and their own ideologies, but at the European level COFACE acts as a non-denominational body. Our setup and our methods of work are quite traditional: we have a General Assembly, a council, a bureau and a series of working groups for practical family issues like housing, education, health, consumer issues, standard of living, the problems of rural families, of families with disabled members, etc.

COFACE's objectives are threefold:
1. To inform our members of what is being prepared at the level of the EU as far as legislation is concerned and whether there is an impact on families;
2. to promote family policy inside the European institutions,
3. the horizontal dimension of exchanging information and experiences between the member organizations themselves.

How do we interface with the EU?

The European Commission is the institution which initiates policies. Any European policy must come from the proposal of the European Commission. The Council of Ministers, which is another institution, can only decide on legislative proposals coming from the Commission.

Then there is the European Parliament which has a consultative but more and more powerful role today, and the Economic and Social Committee which gathers trade unions, employers' unions and various interest groups.

Although there is no competence in the EU on family policy, over the years they initiated quite a lot in this field. The European Commission even published a document for the IYF under the title "The European Union and the Family".

Also the European Parliament has done much on family policy. There was a very important resolution in 1983 on the family, another one at the end of 1994 urging to to put European family policy on the Agenda. They also have an inter-group on family policy and an inter-group on consumer issues.

As far as the Council of Ministers is concerned, they organized in 1989 the first meeting of 12 Family Ministers under the French presidency, which, as the first one, was very important. It was even said by the organizers that it happened as the result of years of lobbying by COFACE and its member organizations. There was a second informal meeting of Cultural Ministers in 1994 under German presidency, and we hope that in the near future, under Italian presidency or the Irish one there will also be meetings of Cultural and Family Ministers.

Also inside the Commission family policy is being taken into account: since 1988 they have created a European Observatory on National Family Policies, alongside with a series of other observatories to look at various aspects of community life, mainly in the social field. Since 1988 this European Observatory on national family policies has produced a yearly report.

There are 12, and now 15 national independent experts, from universities for example, who draft a report of what has happened in the last 12 months in their countries as far as family policy is concerned, and that is gathered in a synthesis every year. In the language of the EU this is a very clear message: the aim is to analyze at national levels and to bring information together in a yearly report. Although there is no European family policy, this body has been created and it works!

Back in 1984 they even created a budgetline for actions in favour of families. In that year there was an important resolution voted in the European Parliament, also under pressure from COFACE. With that resolution, the Parliament insisted that there must be a budgetline on actions in favour of families. At the same time, they set up a small unit inside the European Commission dealing with family policy and policy for children. We from COFACE, and also from other family organizations benefit from that budgetline, which still exists, with ups and downs.

Inside the Commission there are also regular meetings of an interservice group to look at the family dimension of other policies. Last but not least there is a regular meeting, at the European level, of senior officials from the Family Ministries of the different member states about which we have heard already from Mrs. Thielenhaus.

What are the most important issues on the table for COFACE at the moment? As you know, the Maastricht Treaty is up for revision in 1996. There is a reflection group preparing an intergovernmental conference to revise the Treaty. We are doing very hard lobbying to get family policy into the Treaty. This may only confirm in writing what is already being done informally. This is one of our arguments. Other arguments are that with the opening of the frontiers there will be large movements of populations, that families will be going from one country to the other and that this will be a European issue. Then there is the concept of a "Citizen of Europe", which cannot be talked about without considering families. There are also the questions of equal opportunities between men and women, the role of the father, which are also family issues.

You see that we have many issues concerning families to be dealt with at a European level. Why not give the opportunity to EU institutions to be able to intervene at their level, and leave issues of European concern at national levels? This is our argumentation, and that is why we are urging to have, maybe just in a few words, entry of family issues into the revised Treaty.

But this is not going to be an easy battle, because there is opposition from most of the member states. They do not even see our reasons. So it is very important that we lobby, not just at the European level, but at national levels, because the national organization have to influence their national governments, who will be the ones to decide.

The experience of our organization can serve others. Family organization do not necessarily agree on everything. There are even disagreements on the definition of the family. We try to be very practical. We see that organizations coming from the same country who would not agree on national issues, when talking and meeting at the European level, can agree on the content of a family policy. The core content of family policy would be: services, resources and time for families. All these issues like child care facilities, benefits for families of whichever kind, parental leave - all organization can agree on that. And these issues are the ones that are being taken up at the European level also.

There are two criteria for successful collaboration between NGOs and the European institutions, according to the experience of COFACE: representativity, otherwise we are not considered; and credibility based on experience that has been built up over the years and gives you recognition of your work. Collaboration with public institutions like the European Union is possible, as COFACE has proven over the years.

LOBBYING INTERNATIONALLY FOR A DECLARATION ON FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

Luis Alberto Petit Herrera, PRODEFA

If we want to secure a coherent follow-up to the International Year of the Family, the possibility of a Declaration on the Family rises immediately to mind. In my view the following step should be the establishment of an international open-ended working group - with the participation of NGOs as a matter of course - to consider the feasibility of such a Declaration.

The idea of a Declaration does not come out of the blue. It is based on a solid foundation, built up in the course of many years, starting from 1982. In 1985, the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family established a working group with the purpose of preparing a document on the family. After seven years of hard work the group reached a consensus on a text called *Guiding Principles on the Family*, with the following self-explanatory subtitle: "Outline presented to all interested non-governmental organizations, Governments and UN bodies as an instrument to facilitate further consideration of a possible Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Families".

As you may know, the General Assembly, at its meeting on 20 september 1993, adopted Resolution 47/237, entitled "International Year of the Family", initially recommended by the Commission for Social Development during its 33rd Session of February 1993 in Vienna, and subsequently approved by ECOSOC. In operative paragraph 20 of this resolution, the Secretary-General is requested "to seek the views of member States of the Commission for Social Development on the desirability to work out a Declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of families on the occasion of the Year".

During the 34th Session of the Commission for Social Development held in New York in April 1995, a member of the Board of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family lobbied for a resolution calling for the creation of an "intrasessional open-ended working group to consider the desirability and modalities to work out a declaration, and report thereon to the 35th Commission. Although the prevailing conditions then existing within the Commission did not permit at that time to table such a resolution, yet we found that a great number of delegates supported the idea.

Also in 1995, a representative of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family attended the four-days meeting of the Third Committe of the General Assembly on Item 105: "Social Development, including questions relative to the World Social Situation and to Youth, Ageing, Disabled Persons and the Family". The issue of a declaration on the family was again raised and a number of countries were once more supportive.

Within the UN system, it is in the Commission for Social Development where the matter will be best carried out; and the next Commission is scheduled for February/March 1997. There is still a lot of work to do and a lot of ground to be covered. A significant and most difficult first step has already been accomplished: that of planting the concept of a Declaration on the Family in the international arena and of opening an essential line of dialogue. In my view, we have come a long way since 1983, when the issue of a Declaration on the Family or the concept of the family as a global entity in itself was met with surprised looks from our interlocutors, as if confronted with an unknown and bizarre notion.

We may ask ourselves, as some people have asked us during the past years: Why a Declaration on the Family?

- From our point of view the rights of the family, alongside the responsibilities entailed in all rights, are based on the principle that the full development of the individual is founded on the respect for all human and social rights, including the rights of intermediate social groups. Among these groups, the family stands out as the main group in human society, since the way families run their common life affects the inner being of the individual and will shape her or his future social behaviour.

- All through historical evolution and geographical diversity, the role of the family has been instrumental and fundamental in the procreation, nurturing, education and socialization of children.

- Alongside the function of shaping and building up the personality of their members, families are the place where you learn how to live in society, where values are transmitted from one generation to another, where solidarity and social exchange are first experienced.

- As a recognized and evolving reality, the family is open to, immersed in and affected by, the outside world and its many manifestations: culture, politics, development, armed conflicts, environment. Because of its vital role, it cannot be viewed by society as a purely private entity.

Although we are involved in an individualistic culture, a considerable number of NGOs all over the world voice a parallel concern for the rights of families and for the support families should receive if they are to assume their vital role at the basis of society.

In our view, the family, as affirmed by one of the jurists who have participated in our conferences and meetings, is "a situation or an ensemble of interests entitled to juridical protection", as regards both the family rights of the individual (e.g. the right to form a family) and the social rights of the family as a global entity: the right to privacy, to the respect for its dignity and its autonomy, the right to social and economic protection...

Concerning the question whether the family is a subject of rights or not, in fact the family is not a physical person, and not a legal entity. Of course there is the concept introduced by German law for companies and firms, so that e.g. contracts can be signed. The jurists we meet at the different conferences organized by PRODEFA agree with the idea that the family is a situation or an ensemble of interests entitled to juridical protection. It is the same position of e.g. different owners of apartments in a building. This community is not a physical person or a legal entity, but the community has a number of rights concerning questions that may arise in connection with common issues.

Taking again up the question "Why a Declaration on the Family?", I would also say: The perception of the family as a global unit and an essential part of the social fabric should lead to the conclusion that a specific declaration enhancing its basic role - without distinction as to ethnic origin, creed or culture - and spelling out its functions and rights, would fill the now existing void among the many already existing Human Rights instruments.

- A Declaration on the Family should clearly support and reiterate the rights of individuals, in particular the hard-gained rights of women.

- The family is a stable community which individuals freely choose to form. A social link such as the family bond, can only derive its origin and legitimacy from the union of free and equal partners.

- A Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Family should also have a universal dimension. This implies that we cannot, we are not going to attempt to define or describe an ideal type of family.

In short, we feel that the references to family issues contained in many international documents should be embodied in a coherent and detailed declaration on the functions, responsibilities and

rights of the family "as the natural and fundamental group unit of society", to quote what the Universal Declaration on Human Rights declared for the first time back in 1948.

As I mentioned at the beginning, there is a text suggested by the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, where such principles or tenets reflect clearly the deliberations of a diversified group on this issue. This initiative is now also supported by an ample segment of the NGO community, as shown by the work done in this field by the Canada National Committe on the IYF, by IUFO and other national and international organizations.

A Declaration on the Family would ensure that the International Year of the Family was not just an episode, just an end in itself, as Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali said in his statement to the International Conference on Families on 18 October 1994: "The International Year of the Family has provided a starting point,... a long-term process of benefit to families".

The Secretary-General also said that "the Year should result in concrete measures to strengthen the situation of the family throughout the world" and affirmed further, that mechanisms for future action were already in place. In our view, a Declaration on the Family would fill a high ranking position among the mechanisms for future action and would ensure that, also quoting the Secretary-General, "the momentum gathered is maintained".

LOBBYING NATIONALLY FOR AND WITH FAMILIES

Agota Benkö, National Association of Large Families, Hungary

Coming from Hungary, I am very happy to present to you our experience with lobbying for a cause with the Government and with decision making bodies. The issue of representing one's interests in the public and to authorities was totally unknown in those countries which are now in transition. Civil society in these countries was more or less destroyed. However, the wish to live in specific communities is anchored deeply in the hearts of people.

So, at the first possibility when the former power became weak, different associations were founded. This process was accelerated after the changes in 1989/90. The taste of freedom was wonderful, but it is not enough to found communities, they also have to fulfill their aims through the collaboration of their members. And in this field the members of the different associations had to und still have to learn a lot.

The National Association of Large Families was founded in 1987 by 120 families. After eight years we have almost 22.000 member families, which are organized in 125 member associations and about 150 local groups. Our association is not confined by any religious or political beliefs. Its main objectives are:

- establishment of communities and organizing ways to help each other,
- representation of the interests of families in Hungary, with a particular concern for families with many children (at least three),
- promotion of the values of family life, for the present and also with regard to future developments.

Only strong communities can fulfill the latter two aims. Lobbying, the presentation of interests of families with the goal to attain family-friendly measures, will be successful only in a family-friendly society. So promoting the values of family life and influencing the public opinion is a very important aim.

We work at two levels, at the national one and at local levels. At the national level we try to influence the dicision makers and legislators. At the time of the foundation of our organization, the first taxation system was under elaboration. It did not take into account the number of dependents of a family. With very hard expert work we could achieve, that at least families with three or more children received an allowance. We did not ask for privileges, but for a proportional sharing in the taxation system. This result was very inspiring at the time when the former system was in power.

At the time of the big change we had great hopes. The life of the association was very active in an organizational way and the number of members grew rapidly. We were not the only ones who thought that it would be easier to get into contact with the decision makers. And we hoped that the new government would be more family friendly. I would like to emphasize, that we know very well what difficulties Hungary has to face, but in in these circumstances priorities can show to the society whether the direction is family-friendly or not.

In a short time our hopes in this field were gone. However, we continue lobbying among MPs from that time onwards. We are in contact with every party that has seats in Parliament. We share our proposals with the authorities of the party leaderships and the fractions in Parliament. Since the time of our first great success, we have suffered many defeats in legislation. This went that far that last year the allowances for children were fully taken away in the taxation system. This spring, the recently elected government had taken measures which are that restrictive, that more and more families would have been pushed under the minimum standard of living, and the poorest would not have been protected either.

We protested in all possible ways, and argued by our experts at all possible forums. We were not listened to. After a two month struggle we made up our minds to organize a demonstration after having asked all bodies of our association. Deliberately we organized the demonstration on the day before the International Day of the Family. About 12.000 people, adults and children, whole families came to demonstrate. Also other organizations took part in it.

The demonstration was successful, as the Parliament made some amendments according to the original idea. But we were still not satisfied. We were concerned that the recent law was against the Hungarian Constitution. So we went to the court which is to examine whether a bill or any measures are in harmony with the Constitution or not. We were held to be right in all the points we opposed. The law is still not in force. In the recent weeks the law of taxation is under discussion, and we try again to stand up for the interests of families.

In our work we found out, that a very important element is collaboration with other NGOs. I must say, however, that this collaboration is more difficult to achieve than a coalition agreement between two political parties. Maybe the reason is that NGOs are a newly born part of our society.

On the local level our organizations are in contact with the local authorities and other local NGOs. Normally, the local organizations protect the interests of their constituency, in collaboration with the bodies mentioned. In our particular case families are directly involved. Our members take the opportunity to live up to their rights and they also show their readiness to help in solving local problems. We think it is very important that we do not only want to enforce rights, but that we also fulfill duties and tasks in favour of the community.

According to the election law, associations can send candidates to local elections. In 1994, we took advantage of this opportunity and organized campaigns, local programmes and meetingsetc. We had some 35o candidates, partly from our own programme, partly supporting candidates from other associations, who sometimes belonged to different parties. It was a great experience for all of us. Families joined in the campaign, they had to work for the candidates,

they had to choose the best one for representing their interests. And of course it was an experience also for our Board to learn how to proceed in a non-party political way.

These are just a few examples given from our work. There are other fields, like education and environmental concerns which are also in our interest, but in the short time available I cannot expand on them. Our association has built up a good image in the public during the years since its existence, due to its tolerant attitude, but also due to its consequent representation of the values and interests of families. There is a very long way before us, but deep in my heart I do believe we shall succeed one day.

NETWORKING GLOBALLY FOR EFFECTIVE FAMILY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Eugene Rolfe, International Family Policy Forum

As a person responsible for liaison with Member States and National Coordinators at the UN Secretariat for IYF, I have been directly involved in the many things that happened before and during the International Year of the Family. I wish to explicitly say that it has been a privilege and a pleasure. I have also heard many other people say that all these were very moving experiences, which touched people's hearts and induced them to work as hard as never before. The world is not the same after the IYF, as Mr. Sokalski often said; it is also not what it was during the Year. We are at a critical juncture in the evolution of the issue, also at an international level.

Let me present a kind of informal history of the International Year of the Family. Before its proclamation there were many organizations doing good and solid work on the issue of the family; they brought attention to this issue, and many were involved in the proclamation of the Year itself. Many of them are still with us today, they were strengthened in the course of the Year and are now reclaiming the agenda, which was very much theirs before many other people became involved. This is a transition issue in itself.

When the IYF was conceived initially, it was not an idea meeting immediate international favour, in fact, there was quite some disfavour. Many governments felt, that Family was not an issue to be taken up by the United Nations, and many NGOs and also research institutes felt the same was. We now know that they feared that definitions of what the family is would be imposed, that the absence of a definition would render to topic too loose, that there would be no practical value to come from it; many Governments expressed concerns about International Years themselves.

We know these concerns because we overcame them, largely because we used a conservative and issue management. This means that we felt we would not have to address those kinds of concerns to get down to practical, real progress in the situation of families and the recognition of the importance of families for the human society. And indeed, this approach from a functionalist view was successful and won great favour among national governments. Family was also cast as a development issue and in the context of Human Rights, as "building the smallest democracy at the heart of society". This strategy was applied with consequence at the level of the UN, it found its way into all the documentation and the resolutions prepared by the IYF Secretariat, it was used also by the leaders in the non-governmental community, nationally and internationally.

By "national" I mean those groups that were responsible for the IYF. It had the effect of de-politicizing the topic; IYF thus became the only Year with a de-politicized issue! As a result of

this strategy, consensus was reached, bridges were built and commitment gained from an enormous cross section of human society and with organizations from the grass roots level. It became a great success and it had the effect, that the world of professions started to join etc.

What happened then in the evolution of the topic? How is it that at the moment we find ourselves at a point where governments are extremely reluctant to take this huge event, this source of joy for so many people, this IYF professed by leaders all over the world as a profoundly important event, as something more than a somewhat episodic experience?

I think, it is because we in some way began to lose the agenda. We can all be very pleased that in the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development substantial mentioning was made of the family, that in the Population Conference in Cairo there were solid recognitions of the family, similarly in Beijing at the 4th Women's Conference, which was expected with some anxiety, and there will probably be the same during the HABITAT Conference in Istanbul.

However, in a certain way, in each of these instances we began to lose this sense of pragmatism, we began to lose the sense of families as functional, basic units of society, which now and in all phases of history and in all societies had served, where people get things done for one another and where they make things happen.

For carrying forward the issue, the idea was discussed to furnish an international instrument, to develop a tool as a basis for action. References were collected as a significant platform for work in the future. Some thought has to be given to the development of mechanisms for the partners and partnerships that built up during the Year, for the continuation of the pragmatic point of view. It must be something that recaptures the agenda and leads to concrete policies for and research on families all over the world, that restores families into the substance of the discussion on development.

At the UN they seem to be reluctant to believe that we can achieve something of that sort together, as they were in 1989. The evidence of the International Year of the Family proved that this belief had been wrong, because there was joint action. Now, at this time of transition, the things that made us successful in the Year, can again make us successful as we go forward. But it is a new situation and we will have to find new ways for our work.

Some words on the International Family Policy Forum: it is meant to be an initiative to meet the needs for this transition to the future. It is not an organization in the usual sense with members, we rather talk about partners. It is not to exist over and above all those who want to do practical work for families, it is to strengthen them as agents of development in all its forms, through international consensus, exchange and cooperation. We are committed to the expansion and refinement of knowledge and support for activities which enhance the capacities of policy actors at all levels to develop, adapt and implement policies which account for families, in all their diversity, within the broad framework of sustainable, comprehensive approaches to development.

Our partners are many and responses have been tremendous. In the short time that the Forum has actually been operating, we developed a number of projects including expert group meetings, the first one on the subject of families in the World Social Summit, another on families and enterprises, another on family impact consideration, and so forth. All these undertakings are exciting adventures. It is for all of us continuing to work together, and recapturing the spirit that allowed us to talk to one another about families and their appreciation, and get something done that was not possible before.

KEY-NOTE ADDRESS

FUTURE PRO-FAMILY ACTION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Dr. Sonja Moser, Austrian Federal Minister for Youth and Family Affairs

Let me express my heartfelt thanks for having the opportunity to address you here at the United Nations in Vienna, which until recently was the site of the IYF Secretariat.

The very fact that the International Year of the Family came into being is a tremendous success. But beyond that, the IYF was a great success in what it triggered because it served as a social opportunity to intensify awareness and action in support of families world-wide. Thus it has aimed at creating an atmosphere for families to help fulfill their functions in society which in substance are the same all over the world. Families are right at the heart of society, and their being able to fulfill their functions socially and emotionally, has always been of great benefit to the individual as well as to society as a whole.

Can there be any doubt that families deserve support all over the world, support not only by an International Year, but by a Decade of the Family, in order to improve their living conditions more effectively? I know that this idea of a Decade of the Family, strongly promoted by my country, was not accepted by the last UN General Assembly, but still this idea should live on, and repeated efforts be undertaken to make it come true.

Austria has played a leading role in promoting families, internationally and nationally, also at the UN level. Beyond that we are most pleased about the existence and brilliant work of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, to the functioning of which we contributed substantially. We highly appreciate that our support enabled your Committe to be "the most prominent" of the NGO platforms of the IYF, as the Secretary-General put it, and are glad to join the praise of the President of the UN General Assembly of last year on its "particularly effective work, exemplified by organizing the World NGO Forum Launching the Year in Malta, its numerous substantive and promotional activities and its broad networking."

Austria as a country was very active in the IYF. The success came not only from the mobilization of the grass-roots family level, but because the pro-family movements came from there: from the bottom up. So we could use the momentum that had always existed, waiting for support on a national and international level.

One decisive action was the installation of the Austrian National Committee for the Preparation and Observance of the IYF, which integrated all organizations - political as well as non-political - being active for and with families. They implemented 15 Working Groups on those themes that are most relevant for families. Characteristically, nominations for these working groups came from all over Austria, the participants had the most varying backgrounds, but all had in common their interests in family matters and their personal commitment.

The results of these 15 working groups are presented in a national report, which was further condensed into a basic programme by the coordinator of the National Committee, Helmuth Schattovits, entitled "Family Programme for Austria - A Pact of Solidarity". It gives an outlook beyond the IYF on the basis of the detailed results of the working groups. Together with the other reports, it was accepted by the Austrian Government in September of last year. Even before this official acceptance, it has influenced discussion in many ways.

Several of the working-groups continue to exist and have produced concrete proposals, some of which have already been put into effect. One example is an elaborate concept on parental

education for the whole country which the group on Family and Education has produced. Meanwhile specific measures for its promotion have been secured, and additional financial means have given support to various activities in parental education all over Austria.

Another most basic question was being dealt with that has gained momentum during the IYF: one working group concentrated on the contributions of families as producers. This topic has come up on the question of unpaid work, mostly of women, but is even more relevant for families. Families are highly active units of society, they do not only "carry burdens" but produce a considerable output. The work done in families - not only household work but also, and mainly, the practical and emotional side of care for one another including the rearing of children - would add at least 40% to the Gross National Product of the country; some give even higher percentages.

This makes evident, that families have to be seen not primarily as recipients of social benefits. What society owes them is an appreciation of their substance and also a material appreciation of their work which is done on behalf of all its members.

This approach to families and their functions gives a sound basis for family policies, and makes clear, that family politics are different from social and welfare politics. Whenever families cannot fulfill their obligations, the costs of what is needed to substitute their missing contributions become obvious. So family politics also mean societal politics, and only partially carry aspects of social politics as they are usually understood.

Especially in times of short financial resources this aspect of the family as an efficient basic unit for a functioning society must be kept in mind so as to ensure that streamlining the social welfare structures does not put additional burdens on those who want to live with their families and their children.

Another outcome of the IYF, namely the idea of family impact consideration for governments and organizations is of great eminence. This means promoting family-sensitive policies which involve families into the decision making process. In Austria first steps have been taken by some federal states to establish mechanisms for that process.

Thus it becomes evident that the IYF must not be an end in itself, nor should particular family programmes end now. IYF has to be seen as part of a long-term process to which Austria feels deeply committed, for enabling families to recognize their own resources and to carry out their responsibilities, also in a changing world. For this endeavour, partnership within and for the families is at the heart of the matter. The International Year of the Family has been an experience in that partnership, for, with and in families, as well as between governments, the UN and the NGOs, all over the world.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Joanna Foster

At the end of this two day's Seminar I do feel even more sure than ever about the importance of long term commitment for the family. More than ever I am convinced that we have to stress prevention of family breakdown, of family crises leading to families breaking up. Of course we have to keep in mind the huge pace of technological and social development and their really global dimensions. But the more we have to assess the value of stability which is the consequence of positive family life and which works against that kind of insecurity which is threatening large groups of society.

We could save the nations enormous costs by enforcing prevention work for families. Cost-benefit consideration on the financial drain of public means by communication breakdown between parents, between parents and children could reveal that prevention would be much cheaper. But there must be learning processes for what we are doing, and how we are doing it. A Seminar like this helps to share good practices of one country and to transform them into other cultures. In many respects we can learn many things from each other. There must be archives of what people have been doing during the IYF; this must be taken up on all levels, including by students, and some things developed in depth.

In the UK, given our special orthography, we have always had the three "Rs" to be contained in education: Reading, wRiting, aRithmetics. During the IYF we added another R: Relationship. We badly need education for relationships, and this in many places is sadly missing.

As one of the participants said, there are also relationships in the extended families as we have them, between siblings and between different generations. We do not cultivate them in our Western societies, we little think about the important roles grandparents can play in many respects for the coherence of families and for the understanding of being a family.

We talked a lot about the wide field of what governments, policy makers, employers and trade unions could and should do. But they will not do it unless we keep pushing them. After the IYF we are in a new stage, we have to think of how we can achieve the maximum impact with probably smaller resources. We have to keep family a political issue - but we also have to make it everybody's issue. As a participant said about the joy when taking part in a family event: she felt that families' input to society is something meaningful, that families are not marginal, but the most valuable part of society.

Nonetheless, actions must be issue based, and we have to find out, who is going to be the movers and shakers about these issues. In each of your countries we have to ask, who is the champion in the government, who is the champion with the employers - as relationship between family and work is another basic issue - etc. We do not need to be competitive, but we have to find different ways to feed in information after we have found out who are the main communicators, who are the coordinators and with whom are we going to collaborate in order to make our voices strong enough to be heard.

I would like to encourage you to think about the three core issues on the family that came out to you during this seminar, and what the actions you and your organizations are going to take during the coming year. This will be in the spirit of your committee, actions far beyond the IYF.

CLOSING OF THE SEMINAR

Dennis Callagy

Thank you, dear Joanna, for so ably chairing our seminar. You brought out the best of us and enormously helped towards our communication. We also wish to thank all the participants, some of them having travelled very far. This has been a truly international meeting, more than we had hoped for. After the intensity of the International Year of the Family we now have to embark on a new kind of dealing with the family - in normalcy.

Thank you all!

ANNEX

From: Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
To: Members and the worldwide network

"NGOs Beyond IYF - From Awareness to Implementation"

Draft Frame For Future Action: 1996-1997

A. INTRODUCTION

The Draft Frame for Future Action is meant to be a flexible, supportive tool for NGOs for

- developing concepts for effective family-focussed activities at all levels after IYF for a suggested period of two years, 1st evaluation (assessment of progress) to take place at a seminar in 1997
- contributing to clarity of proposed concepts by
    * encouraging in-depth studies of family issues as a basis for relevant concepts of activities
    * operationalizing concepts by means of defining issues, objectives, strategies, ways of implementation and assessment of progress (action sheets)
- facilitating joint actions among NGOs, also in cooperation with institutions at all levels
- sharing experiences and improving information flow
- increasing visibility and credibility of NGO actions
- improving the understanding of regional differences
- leading hopefully to a Global Platform for and with families in the near future
- providing background for funding applications
- others

B. BASIS FOR ACTION

- Experiences, practices and achievements gained during IYF; objectives of IYF
- Issues emerging during IYF preparatory and implementing processes
- Ongoing programmes, activities, plans of action ...
- Supporting material:
    * INGO Statements
    * Guidelines for action and draft programmes for e.g. International Year for the Eradication of Poverty 1996, International Year for Older Persons 1999, etc.
    * Related paragraphes in documents adopted by the United Nations, e.g. Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development
    * Publications, e.g. Occasional Papers published by the UN-IYF Secretariat, by NGO Committees, individual NGOs, Research Institutions, etc.
- Others

C. DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION SHEETS as a tool for effective planning and assessment of activities (this will be an ongoing process according to participation and contributions by NGOs)

C.1. Substantive Priority Issues

Proposals by

a) NGO Committees on the Family, Vienna, New York and Paris

b) Working Groups of the 5th International Seminar "Focus on Families - Action and Issues beyond IYF", Vienna 6-7 November 1995

c) Individual NGOs, network

C.2. Objectives

C.3. Strategies

C.4. Implementation

C.5. Evaluation (Assessment of Progress)

D. CONTINUOUS UP-DATING OF DRAFT FRAME FOR FUTURE ACTION
(by a working group of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family)

For this purpose a response on the following points would be appreciated:

ISSUES ADDRESSED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION:
COPY OF ACTION SHEET DEVELOPED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION:
REFLECTION ON ATTACHED ACTION SHEETS:
AREAS WHERE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NEEDED:
FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS OF YOUR ACTION:

Please send your response as soon as possible (at the latest by October 15, 1996) to:

IYF-NGO Secretariat
An der Hülben 1/15;
A-1010 Wien; Austria
fax: 43-1-5121638 75

Vienna, February 1996

From: Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
To: Members and the network

ACTION SHEET 1996-1997

ISSUE:
MAINSTREAMING FAMILY CONCERNS INTO SOCIAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

OBJECTIVES:

- Deepen awareness of decision-makers of the family dimension in all policies and programmes
- integration of family dimension in all policies and programmes
- consideration of the impact of family issues on all social interaction - political as well as business and private
- involvement of families in policy and programme processes
- others

STRATEGIES:

- Analysis of issues and priorities of actual policy measures for families
- realistic examination and definition by individual NGOs of their family objectives and commitment
- identification of key areas for action and programme planning according to priority
- strengthening family competences for participatory process
- lobbying for priority issue with decision makers
- coalition building with partners pursuing similar objectives
- publicity
- others

IMPLEMENTATION:

- familiarizing with terminology and content of "mainstreaming"
- studying national and international mechanisms concerned
- involving families in programme planning
- maintaining contacts with decision makers in goverment, institutions, business and others
- developing position papers on priority issue presenting the organization's specific view
- presenting statements and lobbying at important local, national, international meetings
- development and mailing of information material
- contact with media
- in-depth study of priority issues in seminars, workshops, etc. involving organization's membership, representatives of governments, institutions, business and families
- others

EVALUATION (ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS):

- examples of concrete measures taken in legislation, institutions, ...
- impact level and outreach of contacts made
- statistical data (number of requests for information, participation at meetings, etc.)
- coverage in media
- other

Vienna, February 1996

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Francesco BELLETTI: Sociologist; Vice-Director of the International Center for Family Studies (CISF), Milan; teacher of Social Services Management at the Catholic University of Milan.

John BENNETT: Co-ordinator of the Childhood and Family Education Programme of UNESCO, Paris.

Agota BENKÖ, Dr.: Studies in agriculture and social work; president of the National Association of Large Families, Hungary; mother of five children.

Janet CUNNINGHAM: Graduate of the Universities of Cape Town, of Zimbabwe and the London Bible College; coordinator of the international Marriage and Family Work, of "AID for AIDS" and "Design for the Family" projects of Scripture Union in 41 countries of Africa, author of numerous books.

Joanna FOSTER, Dr h.c.mult, UK; i.a. President of the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; Chair of the UK Council of IYF; International Business School in Fontainebleau; presently Director of the British Telecommunications Forum, which campaigns for better communication across generations, conerning the changing roles of women and men, and communication at work and at home.

Wassilios E. FTHENAKIS; DDDr. in educational science, anthropology, molecular genetics and psychology in Greece and Munich; since 1975 Director of the State Institute for Early Education and Family Research in Munich, and since 1987 Professor of Applied Developmental Psychology and Family Resarch at the University of Augsburg; author of numerous books and publications; membership in numerous scientific associations.

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